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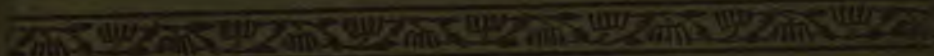
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THE
FOREIGN FRIENDS
OF FIRE FRIENDS

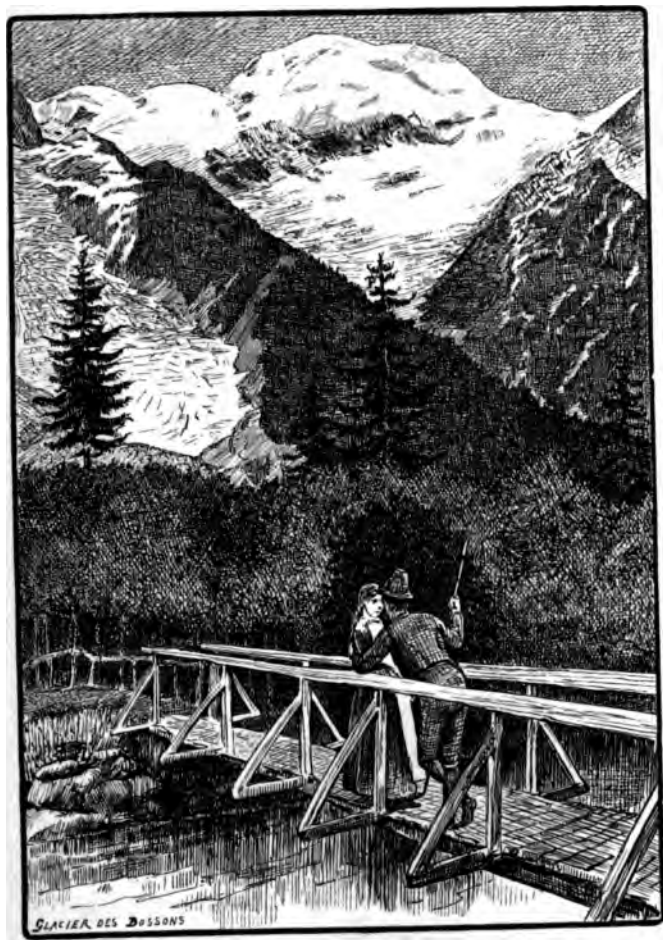




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THE FOREIGN FREAKS OF
FIVE FRIENDS





Frontispiece.]



THE FOREIGN FREAKS

OF

FIVE FRIENDS

BY

C. A. JONES

AUTHOR OF "CHURCH STORIES," ETC.



LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1882

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TO
MY FOUR FELLOW-TRAVELLERS
THIS LITTLE SKETCH
OF FIVE HAPPY WEEKS IN FOREIGN LANDS
IS VERY AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

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THE FOREIGN FREAKS OF FIVE FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

SHOWING HOW IT ALL CAME ABOUT.



ON the 16th of July, 188—, the columns of the daily papers informed us that, during the whole of the present century, the thermometer had not been known to reach to such a height, as it had reached on the preceding day, *i.e.* the Feast of St. Swithin.

The temperature registered on the hottest days at Calcutta, Madras,

and Bombay, was a joke to it; and old Anglo-Indians wrote sage letters to the *Times* about the folly and enormity of men and women exposing themselves to the glaring heat of that scorching mid-day sun.

I was one of those *sane*, or rather *insane*, individuals who, for some reason or another, found myself at Charing Cross about noon on that scorching day. I believe I had meditated some shopping expedition; but a conviction came to me that it might be safer to go home again, and put off my purchases, until a cooler morning presented itself.

I got into an omnibus, which would convey me to my destination in about an hour, but no sooner had I got in, than I made up my mind to get out again; the atmosphere was more than it was possible to stand, the sun streaming in at the blindless windows, and threatening the unhappy passengers with all kinds of ills.

There was one stout lady sitting opposite me, with crimson roses in her bonnet, about whom I have felt anxious ever since; she remarked, in a friendly manner, that it "*was* a treat to get into a '*bus* on such a day."

I wished I could have endorsed the sentiment. All I felt was, that I must get out of it. I stood

once more upon the scorching pavement. I think I meditated for an instant whether it would be wise to walk as far as Covent Garden, and purchase a cabbage, and put a leaf inside my bonnet, for I had heard the conductor of the omnibus remark that "it was a fine thing;" but I gave up the project, as I saw the friendly face of an old cabman who lived in my neighbourhood.

"Will you ride, ma'am?" he said; "it's too warm for anything else."

Need I say that I got into his cab and drove home?

"I hear we're going to have weeks of this here weather," were his parting words to me; and they haunted me during the remainder of the day, for only that very morning I had refused a tempting invitation to stay with friends in Devonshire, and had made up my mind to remain in London, or rather in one of the suburbs of it in which I live, all through the summer.

I may as well say at once that I am not rich. I work for my daily bread, and it is for this reason that I have made up my mind to send this little book into the world, thinking that my experience may perhaps encourage others to take a sorely needed holiday, amidst new scenes and people, and come home fresh to their work—if they have

to do it—or if not that, with new vigour for the daily duties which *must* come into all our lives.

I was sitting alone on that evening of the 16th of July, wishing, I think, at that particular moment, that a refreshing shower would come, even if it were to involve rain for forty consecutive days, when I heard the postman's knock.

I had hardly energy enough to wonder whether he had brought a letter for me. In London one gets so accustomed to letters at all hours, that, except under peculiar circumstances, it is difficult to get up any excitement about them.

However, the servant came in, and handed me a missive, which I opened languidly. I felt I knew beforehand what it was about; it of course contained an invitation to a friend's house, a short distance from London.

"Impossible," I muttered, without reading a line of it, "quite impossible; in fact, it would be wrong to attempt it in such weather as this."

I saw that the letter was a long one—a sheet and a half, rather closely written. I took up the half-sheet, and read that first. I own I was puzzled and bewildered at its contents. Here is a specimen of them:

"You know I trust you entirely, and put myself entirely in your hands; you shall do exactly as you

like in everything, go where you like, arrange things as you think best ; and my cousin Rosa places exactly the same faith in you that I do." "Very trustful of Cousin Rosa," I thought. "I have never seen her in my life ; in fact, I have never before heard of such a person. What can it all mean ?"

Then came the concluding words of the letter, evidently written in a great hurry, and under considerable excitement : "As soon as we can—as well as we can—as long as we can ; that is all I have to say ; and I am sure *you* will do all this, better than any one else in the world could do it."

The situation was becoming serious. I felt that some great weight of responsibility was about to be forced upon me, *nolens volens*. The *whole* sheet of my friend's epistle had fallen upon the floor, at some little distance from me ; it was an effort to pick it up—at least, it would have been, five minutes before ; but curiosity mastered heat and languor, and in another moment or two I had found out what it all meant—what it was that was expected of me, and under what conditions it was that my friend and Cousin Rosa placed such profound faith in me.

They had settled that they, and two other friends of mine, and of my correspondent's—whom

I will call Kate Gordon—were to go to Switzerland ; and I, on the strength of having been in France and in Germany, and having a tolerably intimate acquaintance with both languages, was “personally to conduct the tour.” And we were “to start as soon as we could, do it as well as we could, and stay away as long as we could ;” and for all this *I* was to be responsible.

I was to arrange everything to please four ladies, three of them, to my certain knowledge, possessing strong wills of their own ; each of them, perhaps, wanting to do the very things that the other did not wish to do. The three, in spite of this *peculiarity* of liking their own way, were just the very people whom, *singly*, I should have chosen for such an expedition as the one proposed—clever, intelligent, energetic ; in fact, charming *compagnons de voyage*.

“If *one* of them had asked me to go with her, how delightful it would have been !” I mused. Then I turned once more to Kate’s letter. “You see, dear, we shall be able to do so very much more for our money, because of the numbers. Don’t you think we shall be able to manage Zermatt? However, I will not even make a suggestion ; Rosa, in her letter this morning, particularly begged me to leave it all to you.”

I felt that Cousin Rosa's faith in me was a thing to be proud of; it inspired me with confidence. The numbers were alarming, the responsibility somewhat overwhelming; but I determined not to shrink from it. Swiss mountains and valleys; ice, and snow, and glacier—oh, what a vision of delight they all were, as I looked out of the window upon the dusty road, and upon the burnt-up flowers in my little front garden.

I could not trust myself to write a letter on the subject; I sent off a post-card at once to say that I should be at Richmond early the next day. I did not stipulate that unless the weather were a little cooler, I could not undertake the expedition; heat was a minor consideration now, with that background of snow and ice in the distance.

Well, I went, and it was all settled. We four, Kate Gordon, Margaret and Mary Saunders, and myself, sat in conclave.

I rose to the importance of the occasion. I was called "Mrs. Cook" by my friends, and submitted quietly both to the brevet rank (I am a spinster), and to the name which, whether rightly or wrongly, savours somewhat of vulgarity.

What *did* it matter? I had made up my mind to stay in London, during July and August, and I was going to Switzerland. Who would not have

put up with any *sobriquet* which was the means to such an end? The money question was settled, and laid in crisp notes upon the table before us—one hundred and twenty-five pounds—for Cousin Rosa had trustfully sent hers up. She herself was only to meet us at Charing Cross Station, on the evening of our departure.

“How long will it last?” said Kate.

“Impossible to tell,” I answered, trying to look very wise. “I should say the length of our stay depends very much upon ourselves; we must not be extravagant.”

“Of course not,” she answered; “we shall not want much to eat.”

“Excuse me,” I replied, “we shall want a great deal to eat; people always do when they are travelling. It is the common mistake into which English people fall, to think that they can go abroad, do six times as much walking as they do at home, and live upon nothing.”

There was a sigh all round.

“Now,” I said, “will you trust me to do my best, and if, at the end of a week, the money is all gone, will you be content to come home?”

They tried to say that nothing would give them greater pleasure than to return at the end of a week, *if necessary*; but the next minute Margaret

was calculating whether, if we started at the end of the month (I could not leave home earlier), there was any chance of our being in England again by the 2nd or 3rd of September.

Margaret was the only one except myself who had been abroad before. She and I had both seen Brussels and the Rhine, and seventeen years before, I had been in Switzerland; but that was late in the autumn, and it rained all the time we were there, and we crossed the Gemmi in a storm of thunder and lightning.

We were to push straight on to Switzerland *via* Brussels, Cologne, and the Rhine; and on our way back, if possible, we were to see some of the quaint old Belgian cities, with their treasures of art and architecture. We were all unanimous upon our route so far. Our council then broke up, with an emphatic address from myself on the question of luggage.

"We *must* take enough," said Mary ruefully; "it is so very uncomfortable to feel that we have left the very thing behind that we are sure to want."

"You may take as much as you like, my dear," I said, "so long as you get it into the compass of a Gladstone bag, a small portmanteau, or one of those nice little flat boxes that will go under the seat of the railway carriage."

"And nothing more?"

"No, nothing, except a hand-bag if you like it; and I may as well warn you that in most cases you will have to carry your own luggage about at the stations—foreign porters are not as civil as English ones."

I felt I was getting despotic and tyrannical; the sudden dignity which had been conferred upon me was too much for me; I was using my newly-acquired power mercilessly. Cousin Rosa's trust in me would be a very mistaken one unless I pulled myself up a little.

"You may each take a waterproof case, a 'hold-all,' I think it is called, with a cloak and shawl in it, and it will hold any amount of things besides; in fact, I heard of some ladies who took nothing else when they went to Switzerland, and I——"

"Oh, please don't," exclaimed Mary, stretching out her hand as though she intended to withdraw her share of the money; "we really cannot go about *objects*."

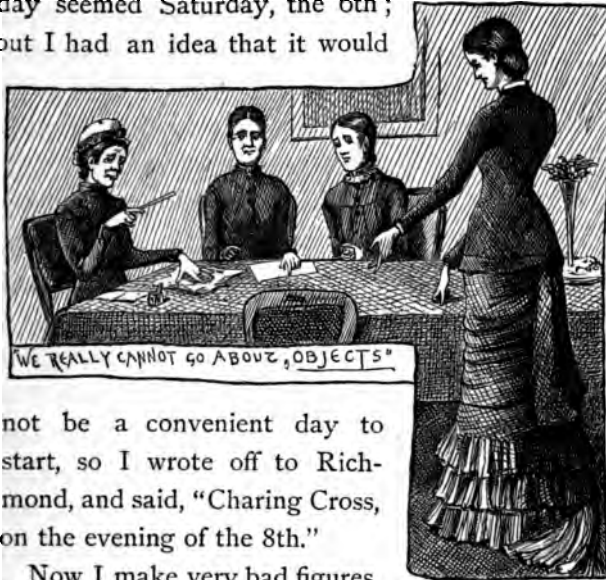
"I was only saying what other people did, not that we are to do it; so now it's all settled, even to the coming home at the end of a week, if necessary."

So we parted, only to meet again on the platform of the railway station.

The letters that passed between us during the

next fortnight were something wonderful. It was settled that we were not to leave England until after the 1st of August; then Cousin Rosa wrote and asked if it might be after the 5th.

Now the 5th was on a Friday, and the first clear day seemed Saturday, the 6th; but I had an idea that it would



not be a convenient day to start, so I wrote off to Richmond, and said, "Charing Cross, on the evening of the 8th."

Now I make very bad figures, but how ever I arrived at making an eight look like a six, I don't know. I received a frantic post-card: "We don't think Saturday at all a good day. Would not Monday be better?"

Oh, those figures of mine! I had been punished for their grotesqueness so often when I was a child,

and all to no purpose. Of course I must write and say that I had *meant* the 8th. I hoped Cousin Rosa would not hear of this ; she might begin to lose faith in " Mrs. Cook " before we started.

By the next post, before I had written the humble apology I meditated for my blundering hieroglyphics, came another post-card : " Mr. Smith, who lives next door to us, says he started on a Saturday last year, and it was delightful ; he quite advises us to keep to your arrangement."

My arrangement ! When I had particularly wished to avoid this Saturday flitting. However, there was no help for it ; we were to meet at Charing Cross at 7.30 on the 6th, and we did meet, Cousin Rosa and all of us. And we had just a few minutes in which to compare our luggage, and to pay each other compliments upon its neatness and compactness, and then off went the train. London —hot, smoky, steamy London was behind us, and the sun was setting behind the sweet Kentish hills as, full of the thought of all the pleasure that was before us, we were whirled along to Dover.

CHAPTER II.

LONDON TO BRUSSELS: FIRST EXPERIENCES BY
LAND AND SEA.

It was a perfect night. No moon, but the stars shining as I had hardly ever seen them shine before; and we walked on to the Ostend boat more cheerfully than might have been expected under the circumstances; for on one point we were all agreed, we had a horror of steamers.

However pleasant might be our anticipations of continental travelling, the first step towards it, the ordeal of five or six hours inevitable *mal de mer*, was certainly a thing to be dreaded. Comfort was to be blended with economy in all our proceedings. We had quite made up our minds always to travel second class by rail; but second class on board a steamer was not to be thought of for an instant. We stood upon the deck; there were only four passengers, besides ourselves, foreigners, with through first-class tickets.

During the journey down from London, my friends had given me to understand that they hoped to be away a month. "Not under ordinary circumstances, of course," they said; "but with such a manager as you are it ought to be done."

Do not think me conceited, I am simply repeating their words. How they had all of them arrived at this implicit trust in me, I cannot imagine; it was touching of them, as well as weak.

However, there it was, and I was bound to do my best. I looked longingly at the empty deck. I made a calculation of the amount likely to be saved if I only could summon up courage to bring forward the suggestion that was in my mind.

Five and twenty shillings at the least! Surely it was worth the venture!

"What do you think," I said deferentially, "of just sitting in the second-class places, until we begin to feel ill? then, of course, we must at once go into the first-class cabin."

"The same thought had just occurred to me," answered Mary, who was of a practical turn of mind; "it would be a great saving, and I really feel quite well."

This was encouraging, as we were still in the harbour; but as the other three echoed her sentiments, the decision was arrived at. We took our

places, watched the white cliffs receding into the distance, did a little talking, a little napping, a little star-gazing; and when, between three and four o'clock on that lovely August morning, we steamed into Ostend, there we were still, in those same seats, quite well. Not a symptom of what we had so dreaded had attacked any one of us.

We were all astonished, at ourselves and at each other; and Cousin Rosa said she was quite sure that that was *the* part of the steamer to choose, and thanked me for thinking of it. My spirits rose; everything looked bright and promising. The custom-house officers were civil and did not as much as open our luggage. We went into the restaurant, and seized upon some rolls; had some scalding coffee poured out into cups, about the size of slop-basins, and when we had gently sipped about two mouthfuls there came the cry, "En voiture, messieurs et mesdames!"

Off we rushed, leaving that refreshing coffee smoking in those huge cups, and the next minute we were in the train, but not off—oh no, full one quarter of an hour did we sit there, whilst the railway officials lounged about the platform and talked Flemish; and when I feebly asked whether there might not be time to finish our coffee, I received an answer, which perhaps meant that we might;

but I did not understand it sufficiently to think it right to avail ourselves of the permission, if such it was. There was a good deal of pathos expended over that lost coffee; I believe Margaret, who is a poetess, wrote an ode upon it, which possibly may be published some day.



I ought to say here that the trains in connection with the Dover steamers start from the quay; all other trains start from the station in the town.

"The country between Ostend and Brussels is for the most part flat and uninteresting"—this is what the guide books say about it; and as we

felt very drowsy, and were able to judge for ourselves that Baedeker and Murray had given a true and graphic description of the scenery, we resigned ourselves to sleep, looking up lazily when we stopped at the numerous stations on the way ; and really sitting up, and rubbing our eyes and feeling very wide awake indeed, when we arrived at Bruges and at Ghent.

We just caught a glimpse of the queer old mediæval glory of the one, and the picturesque canals and bridges of the other ; and we promised ourselves a treat by making a better acquaintance with them both, on our homeward journey. Then we closed our weary eyes again until we reached Brussels.

I say we, which perhaps would lead you to believe that five pairs of eyes were closed. It was not so ; only four of us allowed nature to take its revenge for our sleepless night. We had with us two Baedekers and a Murray, one of the former was a little later edition than the other, and from that morning in the train, until the day when with sad hearts we were again agitating ourselves with the prospect of the horrors of five or six hours at sea, Cousin Rosa never parted with those guide books ; she compared them, she found fault with them, she praised them, by turns.

She must have known the history of every village we passed, the number of its inhabitants, its staple commodities, and the name of its inn. It was almost painful to see any one so engrossed in *study* when out for a holiday; but it was her way of enjoying herself, and, if I may give a piece of advice to any of my fellow-countrymen and countrywomen who meditate either "personally conducting" a tour, or being "personally conducted," it is this: in small matters let your companions have their own way and indulge in their own little idiosyncracies; it makes them happy, although perhaps you cannot enter into their tastes.

Cousin Rosa, notwithstanding the guide books, was the most charming, obliging, and contented of fellow-travellers, although rumour does say that one day, on one of the Swiss lakes, she was so intently studying the description of a snow mountain, that she lost sight of the mountain itself.

But I don't vouch for this fact; if it did take place, it did not in any way disturb her serenity; and her attachment to Messrs. Murray and Baedeker was of considerable advantage to us. We might sleep as long as we pleased, sure that her voice would rouse us just before we came to any place worth looking at.

It roused us now at Brussels.

Up we all jumped, and collected the packages, which, however small in themselves, amounted to a number when all collected together, waiting to be conveyed to their destination.

The Brussels porters must have been taking a holiday that Sunday morning ; there were only two or three of them to be seen ; surly looking fellows, attired in blue blouses, who seemed bent upon wheeling empty trucks along the platform, apparently by way of taking a little exercise. I appealed to them to help us, it was to no purpose ; "they would do it as soon as they were disengaged," they said.

We, meanwhile, were very anxious to get to our hotel ; so we carried our respective packages to the entrance of the station, and there found a friendly coachman, who put all our belongings, and three of our party, into his very small vehicle ; whilst Margaret and myself walked on quickly to the Hôtel de l'Univers, in the Rue Neuve ; a distance of about ten minutes' from the Gare du Nord, at which we had arrived.

The hotel is very charming ; situated in the lower part of the town, but quite equal in every way to the more expensive establishments in the Place Royale.

We went to our rooms, and when we met again

at breakfast in the courtyard, half an hour later, five people more pleased with all that had befallen them so far, it would have been impossible to find.

Even the coffee left at Ostend was forgotten in the fragrant odour of that only waiting to be consumed in as long or short a time as we liked to take about it. It was eight o'clock now, and when after breakfast we went out into the streets, our pleasure increased.

It was all so charming, so bright, so *un-English*; and, much as we love our country, the latter recommendation is always a very great one to us English folk. We have come abroad for change; we want to have it to the full.

We wandered about the streets, looking at the grandly dressed ladies, and at the quaint old Flemish women, in their long black cloaks and hoods; and we sat in the park in the sunshine, and at ten o'clock we went into the cathedral of S. Gudule to High Mass.

The guide books give you a description of the cathedral, and the churches, and the beautiful old Hôtel de Ville, so I will not dwell upon these particulars.

The service that morning was very grand; the music, one of Gounod's masses, being exquisitely rendered.

At one o'clock we had luncheon at a restaurant. I am not going to give you the benefit of our usual *menu*, only a few hints as to the best way of managing such necessary little matters as daily food.

I believe the name of the restaurant we went to was the Globe, just opposite the turning down to the museum.

We ordered three portions of fish and three of meat—"plats du jour" they call them. You have your choice from about twenty dishes, and three portions from any one of them are quite sufficient for five people.

Our meal cost us under ten francs.

I had a new idea to propound to my friends now, more alarming than the second class on board the steamer.

I felt nervous ; I believe by nature I am given to being liberal, not to say lavish ; and I had a kind of feeling that what I was going to suggest might seem mean.

"Do you know," I said, at last, breaking into the subject—"have you the least idea what our dinner this evening at the *table d'hôte* will cost us?"

"Do you mean each of us?" asked Cousin Rosa.

"Yes, if you like to put it so."

Of course they did not know, so I spoke again.

"Six francs each, exclusive of wine; and, of course, we must have wine, or seltzer, or something—the water in these continental towns is not always wholesome."

"Six francs!" they all exclaimed.

"Yes; and six times five is thirty," I said, in a tone of profound dejection, for my mind had travelled beyond the thirty francs immediately under discussion to the two hundred and ten francs that would represent the cost of our dinners at the end of one week. Eight guineas for dinners alone! The shores of England seemed to be drawing very near to me at that moment; the glaciers of Chamouni and Zermatt melted far away into the dim distance.

"We don't want any dinner to-day," said Kate. "I certainly could not eat any."

"Nonsense, Kate," I answered sternly. "Your mother placed you under my care, and you *are* to have some dinner. It is now one o'clock; by seven or eight you will tell a different tale. Yes, dinner we must have; but the question is, need we dine at *table d'hôte*?"

Cousin Rosa here muttered something unintelligible, about "the wrath of the waiters."

In one of the numerous guide books she had been getting up, before she left home, she had

found it stated, as a positive duty, that all travellers *must* sit down to the *table d'hôte* dinner, otherwise they would meet with no civility from the waiters.

"Is it not amusing to see the different people?" said Margaret, who was a keen observer of human nature, and liked nothing better than the study of character.

I was obliged to avow that it *was* amusing sometimes, but that it was not always worth six francs; and besides, we should have numberless opportunities of meeting our fellow-creatures, at other than feeding times. And then I proceeded, with an amount of eloquence at which I was astonished, to depict the inconvenience of *table d'hôte* hours, the length of the meals, the sunsets we should miss—everything, in fact, that could suggest itself to me as a possible argument against thirty francs a day out of the common fund, spent in dinners alone. And when I stopped, breathless and frightened at my own audacity, Mary came to the rescue by saying—

"Why, by having such a meal as the one we have just had every day, instead of dining at *table d'hôte*, we should save more than five pounds a week."

So my proposal was carried by acclamation; I undertaking to bear the wrath of the waiters.

There was none to bear ; in fact, the head-waiter entered into my ideas with *empressement*, when I told him that we proposed having a *petit souper* at eight o'clock, and begged to be allowed to suggest some *potage*, cutlets, a *poulet*, and an ice pudding, and assured me that he himself would see that we were *bien servis*.

Altogether the idea was a most decided success ; the carrying out of it a still greater one.

As we sat down to our comfortable little meal at eight o'clock, my four friends did nothing but talk of its superiority over the long, weary *table d'hôte*.

I was amused, but thankful. Not one of them, but Margaret, had ever dined at the much-abused public dinner ; but we certainly had every reason to be satisfied with the private one.

In open defiance of waiters, who, sometimes, I am bound to confess, looked somewhat perturbed at our decision, we continued this plan of having our meals whenever we could, never once dining at *table d'hôte*, except when we agreed to stay at Chamouni *en pension* for four or five days.

The next day we had two small carriages, and drove about the town, and saw the "lions." Then we visited the museum. We were considerably amused there by two old English ladies, by name Carrie and Bella—so they called each other.

They were evidently not artists, and were rather hurried. Bella sat before a picture for about a second; whereupon Carrie said, "Don't do that; go up the middle, and then you can see both sides at once, as I do."



Bella was obedient, and the sisters, having *done* the pictures, took their departure.

We met them again in a tram-car, evidently trying to see as much of the town as they could in a short time. One word about these tram-cars. They are particularly easy and nice; the seats all

face the horses, and the vehicles are advertised to make the "tour de la Ville." We patronized them two or three times, and we enjoyed the novelty of the thing very much, but we never quite managed the "tour de la Ville." We received a small book containing, at least, a dozen mysterious pieces of paper, which the conductor examined and took from us about every five minutes, and we were turned out into the road and told to get into another car ; and we came back as we went, along the Boulevards, and it was all very pleasant—only, it was not the promised tour.

CHAPTER III.

FROM BRUSSELS TO COBLENZ: MIDNIGHT WANDERINGS—A GRAND CATHEDRAL—MARKETING—THE GEOLOGIST.

THAT evening, at 5.30, we left Brussels *en route* for Cologne. There was just daylight enough for us to form some idea of the beauty of the scenery around Liege, when we reached it, about eight o'clock. We gazed out of the window at the dark waters of the Meuse and at the fortified heights above it, and then we travelled slowly on (Belgian express trains are not rapid) to our journey's end.

There was the usual little visit from the custom-house officers on the way ; but we were evidently not looked upon as suspicious characters. One package for the party, sometimes not that, was all we were ever requested to open. It was half-past eleven when we arrived at Cologne.

The omnibus from the Hôtel du Nord was in waiting ; and we got into it and revelled in the idea

that we should soon be in bed, have a good night's rest, and be quite fresh for the morning.

Alas, for the fallacy of such hopes ! The hotel was crowded. We were sent off in the huge, rattling vehicle to another, that was equally so ; another, with a like fate.

Cousin Rosa, by the dim light of the lamp, consulted Murray and Baedeker ; and I asked her, with a feeble attempt at a joke, " whether they gave any hint about the most comfortable way of making a bed in a gutter."

We drove about for quite an hour ; and at last we turned into a narrow street (the streets in Cologne are all narrow, but this was the narrowest we had yet seen), and a smiling, bowing landlord appeared at the door of the courtyard of a small hotel, and we found we could be taken in, and right thankful were we that it was so.

I believe the beds were not comfortable ; but we all slept soundly, and were ready to explore the town the next morning. There were strange quaint old houses on all sides of us, as we passed on towards the cathedral.

We stood for a few minutes in the *Dom Platz*, gazing up at one of the most splendid Gothic structures in the world. We did not say much to each other ; something of a feeling of awe came into our

hearts, as we thought of all the loving labour that, after years of toil, had brought that magnificent pile to perfection ; thought too, perhaps, of those who, centuries before, had conceived the idea of honouring GOD by building this temple to His glory ; of those who had designed it ; of those who had worked at it.

Then we passed into the nave, and stood before the choir.

I am not going to attempt to describe one single thing in Cologne Cathedral ; all description must fall so very far short of the great reality.

I can only tell you very imperfectly of the glorious summer sunshine coming in through the old stained windows, lighting up pillars, marbles, frescoes, and transepts with a bright but subdued light. I felt as I stood there how small I was, how insignificant, how almost useless ; it was the sense of vastness and of grandeur that somehow seemed to crush me. I cannot describe the feeling. I am sure it has come to many an one standing where I stood, looking up to the vaulted roof above.

A priest at a side altar was celebrating Mass ; two little choir boys, with clear, sweet voices, sang parts of the service ; here and there the faithful knelt, praying reverently. It seemed as though in that grand cathedral, kneeling in that Sacred Presence, one *must* pray.

After a little time we awoke to the fact that we must see the wonders and relics of the church. We declined the services of the numerous guides, who in English, French, and German, alternately, begged to be allowed the honour of showing us all that was to be seen.

Cousin Rosa fell into the hands of one of these functionaries. I found her sorely puzzled over the



figures in the old stained windows above the triforium in the choir, which her guide informed her represented (I spell the word as he pronounced it) "*the yukins.*" I tried to induce him to tell me, in German, what he meant. He utterly declined to do

this ; going on with something else equally unintelligible, and then waving his hand again towards the windows and saying, "The Yukins, vera fine."

A light began to dawn upon me. I *saw* now who those grand old figures were intended to represent. The kings of Judah—the *Few* kings, I presume, our friend meant. I advised Cousin Rosa to give him his *congé*, and to join the rest of the party, who, with one of the cathedral officials, were seeing all that was to be seen. We did it all—the tombs of the three kings, the side chapels, the celebrated *Dombild* or cathedral picture, which represents the Adoration of the Magi ; and then at last we left the cathedral reluctantly, to see a little more of the city of Cologne, and the other churches.

When it was all done, we walked down to the iron bridge which crosses the Rhine to Deutz ; and we stood and looked at the noble river, and at the churches and towers of the grand old city, the cathedral standing above them all, as though it would keep watch and ward over them, and take them all, if need be, within the shelter of its holy wall.

We had made up our minds to leave by an evening train, and sleep at Bonn. Cologne is not a specially agreeable locality in very warm weather ;

and we had friends living at the old University town, whom we thought we should like to see.

We took one last lingering look at the cathedral in the evening light, heard the last sweet echo of the compline hymn, and then we made our way to the station, with a feeling of thankfulness in our hearts at having seen the wondrous church, so full of all historic and religious memories.

We arrived at Bonn just as the sun was setting, and the seven mountains were bathed in its departing glory.

We all got enthusiastic over the beauties of the Rhine ; even Margaret and myself, who had seen it before, agreed that we had forgotten how lovely it was. We watched the last gleam of rosy light fade away behind the mountains, then we made our way through the Hof Garten, and the beautiful avenue of chestnuts, which is called the *Popplesdorf Allee*, to our friend's house, leaving the long plain white buildings of the far-famed University behind us.

I had taken the precaution of telegraphing to our friends that we should appear at nine o'clock. I thought it was as well they should know that they had to provide for five hungry travellers.

Of course they were delighted to see us. Our coming was quite an excitement to them ; and we

talked and laughed, and told the latest home news, and resisted all our host and hostess's entreaties to make their house our hotel for two or three days.

The next morning we were up early and in the market-place, where about three hundred women, with snowy handkerchiefs tied over their heads, were selling fruit, flowers, vegetables, cheese, butter, eggs, and fish. They were very good-natured, very noisy, very anxious that *meine damen* should buy something of them.

We all invested in some sweet little forget-me-not wreaths, which, by the way, were rather a trouble to us afterwards; and then, seeing a small crowd of market women closing round Margaret and Cousin Rosa, I went to see what it all meant. I found Margaret looking more helpless than I had ever seen her (she is generally quite equal to the occasion), and Cousin Rosa was trying very hard to explain something.

"Nein, nein," said both my friends in chorus. "Ja, ja, meine damen!" shouted the more powerful chorus of women. *Sehr billig, large sheep* (i.e. very cheap). And in the meantime there stood the two unhappy victims, one with a pound of butter, the other with a basket of eggs in her hand.

I did not attempt to come to the rescue for a minute; I own I enjoyed the scene. At last,

Margaret turned upon me reproachfully: "It is very unkind of you not to speak," she said.

I advanced a little nearer. A huge bunch of carrots was nearly thrust into my hands, with the recommendation, "*Zehn pfennige*." And the stout woman who proffered me the vegetables counted ten on her fingers, nodded her old head, and said, "Large sheep," once more.

Then I opened my hitherto sealed lips, and demanded an explanation.

"The ladies had bought the butter and eggs," was the answer.

The ladies, of course, had done no such thing; but I did not quite know how to set up a defence.

I began by saying that we were travellers, going on by the very next steamer.

I was met by the rejoinder that travellers *must* eat, and that the butter and eggs, to say nothing of the carrots, would be most refreshing by the way. And then came the positive assurance that that lady (pointing to Cousin Rosa) had bought the eatables.

I saw how it was. In addition to the guide books, Cousin Rosa was very devoted to a phrase book, and I felt quite sure she had misapplied some phrase, and that the women were really under the impression that they had sold their goods.

It was a puzzling position to be in ; and I was obliged to make the best of it. I succeeded at last in convincing the vendors of the butter, eggs, and carrots, that we really could not make use of any of these articles of food on our journey, and asked whether they could not get us any nice fruit.

"*Gewiss*," was the pleased reply. And baskets of fruit—apricots, plums, peaches—were dragged up for my inspection, whilst five or six loud voices all announced that a day on the Rhine without fruit, was not a day at all.

I made my selection, bought a basket, into the bargain, and then off we went down a very narrow, very dirty, very stony street to the river's bank.

Our friends were there, according to promise, to see us off ; more than that, to give us a very pleasant surprise. They were all coming on with us as far as Coblenz ; and Mr. — suggested that it would be very pleasant to have our dinner there, and go on by the next boat.

It was a perfect day—not too much sun ; a soft, subdued light falling upon the old castles, and upon the vine-clad hills, and giving us a kind of dreamy, restful feeling, as we looked upon the fair scenes through which we passed, and thought of the many legends of the old chivalrous times, and of the sweet, sad stories which had been enacted

there, and of the brave lives laid down on the banks of the noble river of which the Germans are so justly proud.

We were nearing Coblenz now, just passing the old town of Andernach, with its mouldering walls and gates extending along the river's bank; and from the church the "Angelus" was sounding, and the sunlight was falling upon the old tower built by Frederick of Cologne, in the twelfth century; and the whole scene seemed to belong to some old chapter in the world's history, so grey, so quaint it all looked, so unlike the rush, and the stir, and the bustle of this nineteenth century in which we live. We passed Neuweid, with its celebrated schools, and then, frowning before us, were the heights of Ehrenbreitstein; the picturesque bridge of boats connecting Coblenz with the great grim fortress.

It was looking very grim now, for quite suddenly heavy lurid clouds seemed to have risen up before us, and just as the steamer touched the landing-stage at Coblenz, great raindrops fell upon the deck, and there was a general rush for cloaks and umbrellas.

These were all most safely packed in our "hold-alls." "We shall not want them," we had said when we started, and Mary had spent ten minutes in rolling up the wraps with extreme neatness; there was not a minute's time to get at them now. We

seized upon our respective packages, glad of two or three auxiliary porters in the persons of our Bonn friends, and made the best of our way to the shore.

By this time it was pouring harder, I think, than I ever saw it rain before. We saw some porters standing under a shed, and begged them to take our bags and boxes to the hotel. They declined, pointing to the drenching shower and shrugging their shoulders.

I had a *mark* in my hand (we had left the land of francs for a while, and got into the land of marks, value one shilling of our money), and I held it up as a kind of bribe.

One fat, good-tempered looking old fellow saw the tempting silver, and came valiantly to the front, relieving Mrs. — and Mary of their share of the burdens.

Two minutes walk more, and we stood in the hall of the Hotel du Geant.

My eye fell upon the luggage. I saw amongst it a Gladstone bag, which bore upon it a ticket of an hotel in the Engadine.

A cold chill fell upon me—not caused by the rain, but by the fact that Mary was the only one amongst us who owned a Gladstone. Mary had never been to the Engadine, and her possessions were of great value to herself and to every one

else. She always had a happy knack of producing, from the capacious depths of her bag all kinds of useful things, which no one else had thought about until they wanted them.

Clearly it would be a serious misfortune to the whole party if *her* property had gone astray. Such a contingency must, if possible, be avoided.

What was to be done? I felt that Mary's feelings must be spared. I seized Mr. ——'s umbrella (he had taken the precaution of bringing one), I whispered a few words to the old porter, promising him another mark if he would brave the elements and come out with me. I saw that he looked upon me as a lunatic; but he possibly had visions of more marks, should his suspicions prove correct, and he be my capturer.

None of the others saw what was going on; in fact, I heard Mary remark how fortunate we had been in getting our belongings to the hotel, under such difficulties.

My old friend informed me when I confided my trouble to him, that some of the luggage had been taken to a neighbouring shed. It was *possible*, not *probable*, that the missing Gladstone might be there.

We went hopelessly on. I saw the steamer go off. All chance of finding the bag *there*, was gone. Then we turned into the shed, and there a very

fussy, very portly old English gentleman was trying hard to make himself understood, and inflicting violent blows with his stick upon—oh, the ecstasy of that moment!—upon Mary's Gladstone.

"Pas mein, non pas mein," he said in angry tones, "Ou est moi? Répondez? Answer? Will you answer?"



The men standing there only smiled, and the poor old gentleman's face assumed a hue that was nearly purple; and then another blow fell upon Mary's property.

"I beg your pardon," I said, trying to attract his attention, "Have you lost a bag?"

"Lost a bag, madam? No—yes—no; at least, it's not a bag; it's more than a bag. I have lost

the most valuable geological specimens that were ever yet found. I have lost the chance of rendering the name of Peter Hopkins famous in his generation."

"Is this it?" I said, calling my old porter forward.

"Madam, you are an angel!"

It was almost worth enduring all the torture I had undergone during the last ten minutes to be thus apostrophized by one whose name, now that the Gladstone was found, was likely to go down to posterity.

I bowed and apologized, and said that I presumed, in the confusion of leaving the vessel, my friend's property and his had been exchanged; and I pointed out to his notice that the bags were just about the same size.

By this time Mr. Hopkins was unfastening the straps of his Gladstone, and the next minute he had presented me with a small piece of dark, ugly looking stone, to which he gave a long name, and of which he begged my acceptance, as a slight token of gratitude for the service I had rendered him.

I had no fancy for geological specimens, so I presented the stone to Cousin Rosa, who went in for science. I am often reminded of Mr. Hopkins by the sight of a cracked hand-glass in Mary's room. She has a special liking for the thing, and

will not replace it by a new one. There is no doubt that the geologist's blows were the cause of the damage. .

My friends were wondering at the length of my absence, when I rejoined them. They thought I had gone to order dinner ; but I had done this before I discovered that Mary's bag was missing. I was almost carried, in spite of all my remonstrances, to a bedroom, whilst my dress was taken off by about four people, and I was attired in dry clothing.

We went downstairs, and had a most luxurious meal ; and afterwards we walked about the steep streets of the town, saw the confluence of the Rhine and the Moselle, which, our geography books told us when we were children, takes place here. Time was getting on, and we made our way to the bridge of boats, and looked up at the heights of Ehrenbreitstein, the sun shining upon them now in all its glory. There was not a trace of the storm which had overtaken us so suddenly two hours before.

We saw our steamer coming quickly on its way. There were a few parting words to be exchanged with our kind friends, and then we were off again to Bingen, whence we intended to get on to Mayence by train, that evening.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM COBLENZ TO BASEL : A LEGEND OF THE
RHINE — AN OLD CITY —
NEARING THE SNOW.



THE scenery between Coblenz and Bingen is more lovely than on any part of the Rhine. That between Bingen and Mayence is somewhat flat and uninteresting.

There were more old castles, more spreading walnut and sycamore trees, more frowning rocks, rising up amidst all the surrounding beauty, than we had yet seen. We passed the royal castle of Stolzenfels, and the picturesque old town of Boppard, with its wooden houses and its grand old nunnery ; then we came

to St. Goar, with the famous ruins of Rheinfels standing up above the little town, and new loveliness seemed to rise up before us, until we saw the great rocks of the Lurlei frowning up above our heads. I suppose every one knows the beautiful legend of the nymph of these rocks; but Cousin Rosa's guide books only speak of it very casually, so I will just give the story here, as shortly as I can.

Well, once upon a time—I believe this is the correct way to give a story of olden times—there was a water nymph named Lore, who lived on the Lei, one of the rocks above St. Goarshausen, and who used to appear in all her loveliness to the boatmen on the Rhine, standing on the summit of the great black rocks. Her drapery and veil were of the colour of the green waters of the river, and her long hair fell over her shoulders like a shower of burnished gold. She was wont to bestow favours upon the true and good, and to oppose and frustrate the schemes of the wicked; and those who ventured up the steep ascent to deride her power were plunged into the deep waters beneath, and lost in the surging waves.

There lived in the Castle of Rheinfels, in those days, an old Count Palatine, named Bruno, with his young son, Hermann, who was one of the most

virtuous and most courageous youths of those chivalrous times,

Hermann was very anxious to see the beautiful nymph of the rock, and every day he wandered into the mysterious neighbourhood of the Lei, sometimes hunting, sometimes with his guitar in his hand, seeking, by the sweet music of his voice, to cause the enchantress to appear.

One evening he was singing softly, his thoughts full of the maiden to whom he was so irresistibly drawn, and suddenly a bright light shone before him, and on the summit of the rock the form of the beautiful Lore became visible.

Full of joy and hope, Hermann started up ; and it seemed to him that the nymph looked at him with eyes full of love, and whispered his name, and beckoned him to come nearer. This he could not do. He walked on a few steps, and then he lost all consciousness, and fell senseless upon the ground.

In the morning he awoke from the deep sleep which had come upon him, and went back to his father's castle ; and from that day a deep gloom and abstraction fell upon him, and his father sought to divert his thoughts by proposing that he should visit the imperial camp, where he might gain the spurs of knighthood.

Hermann was most unwilling to leave the neigh-

bourhood of his enchantress ; but he felt that his honour was at stake, and he dare not disobey the old count's commands.

The evening before that fixed upon for his departure, he once more went out in his boat to look upon the frowning rocks, where the nymph of the Lei lived. This time he was accompanied by a faithful squire, to whom he had entrusted his secret.

The silver light of the moon shone over the calm, deep waters of the Rhine, and over the steep craggy mountains, and upon the noble oaks which swayed to and fro in the air, as Hermann's boat passed beneath their shade, he singing as he went. It was an old love song that he sang, in a clear sweet voice, sometimes putting in words of his own, and conjuring the beautiful vision to appear to him once, only once, before he left his home, to go and fight the battles of his fatherland. His eyes were fixed upon the rocky heights above, but he only saw there what he had seen many times before—the pale moon shining above the dark frowning rocks. Hermann's song died away upon the soft night breeze, when suddenly strange noises were heard, and bright flames darted upwards from the mountains, above which, as was her wont, the maiden stood, with her wand in her hand, bidding the waves obey her commands.

The waters became agitated ; the little boat was whirled round and round in the eddying current, and was thrown violently against the edge of the rock. Hermann sank into the river's depths, to rise no more ; and a wave, larger than the rest, landed the faithful squire on the bank.

With a sad heart he went home to the castle, to tell the brave old father what had befallen his dearly loved son.

Then Count Bruno, in his wrath, swore to be revenged upon the nymph of the Lei ; and the next night he hastened to seek her, with a band of brave companions. There she was, standing in her usual place, with her green drapery and her golden hair falling gracefully round her.

"Where is my son ?" cried the enraged old man ; and for all answer Lore pointed down into the deep water, whilst in a low, sad voice she sang some words which those who listened breathless to the song, failed entirely to catch, but it seemed to them as though she invoked the waves to obey her stern behest.

Then she threw a bright sparkling stone into the water, a shining wave instantly appeared, and Lore glided under the stream and disappeared for ever.

No one has ever seen her since that night ; but

on quiet evenings, in the moonlight, listening boatmen have told how, joined to the splash of their oars, comes the sweet music of a wondrously beautiful voice, and they know that it is the nymph of the Lei singing from her crystal castle. There is a beautiful and distant echo to be heard amongst the rocks, which are now called the Lurlei, and this echo is supposed to have been Lore's parting gift to her old home.

We catch a last glimpse of the enchanted rocks just as the sun is setting upon them. Oh, how beautiful it all is! the Rhine, a pale silver blue, the banks golden green, the houses and walls of the villages by which we pass, almost crimson, in the deep evening glow, and all the mountains and the hills in deep cloud shadow, soft dark blue, sharply outlined against the pale clear sky.

"Can Switzerland be more beautiful than this?" Mary says to me, as we look, with that feeling in our hearts which only God's works *can* give, upon the glorious scene.

"Wait and see," I answered. "I think it must be, from what I remember of it, seen under great disadvantages. We are being prepared for the fuller loveliness, perhaps, just as all through our lives we catch ever and anon some faint far-away glimpse of happiness that will some day be ours, if

we persevere unto the end, and so at last behold the glory that shall be revealed to us."

We are passing the Mouse Tower now, where the old legend tells us old Archbishop Hatto was devoured alive by mice, as a punishment for his cruelty to the poor in the time of famine. When they sought his aid, he compared them to hungry mice; and ordered them to be shut up and bound.

The valley of the Rhine widens very considerably at Bingen, and we look back longingly at the rocks behind us, and bid them farewell in the fast gathering darkness. Then we collect our belongings—I taking most particular care of Mary's Gladstone—the steamer stops at Bingen, and we land, making our way at once to the station, for we have just time to catch the train to Mayence.

We get a carriage to ourselves, and, during the three quarters of an hour's journey, we discuss our plans a little.

"What shall we do? shall we go to Heidelberg and Schaffhausen, or push on straight to Basel and get to Switzerland as quickly as we can?"

I ask the question, and Cousin Rosa answers, as usual, "We will do whatever you think best."

I explained that I really wanted their opinion. I knew both Heidelberg and the falls of the Rhine

well, and so I could have no voice in the matter. I only wanted to please them.

So the four discussed the knotty point, whilst I sat in a corner and indulged in far-away memories of the last time I had been in those scenes, and of those who had been with me then; for *them* "travelling days were done," and sad though some of my thoughts were, I could feel humbly thankful that it was so, and that they were at rest, looking upon loveliness of which the beauties and the glories of earth are but a faint foreshadowing.

I was roused from my reverie by the voices of my friends: "We should like to see Heidelberg and the falls of the Rhine, but we feel that we cannot do everything, and we had better get on into Switzerland."

I was very glad that it was so arranged; and I think we were all thankful, when the train stopped at Mayence, that that day's journey was at an end.

Directly we got to the Hof Von Holland, I ordered a substantial little supper, to which we all did ample justice, and went to bed.

I shall always associate Mayence with the clatter of plates and dishes. My room overlooked a little courtyard in which was a kitchen, and long after midnight did the "washing up" go on, until, whilst

I was thinking it was going to last all night, I fell fast asleep.

We breakfasted early the next morning (N.B. the plates were remarkably clean), and then we went out into the city, which, perhaps, of all German cities, is the most remarkable in historic associations. We made our way along the quay to the cathedral, and stayed there for a while, gazing at all its strange varieties of architecture. There was a priest saying Mass, as is usual in foreign lands, throughout the early morning hours, and poor men and women had left the burdens they were carrying, in the porch, and were kneeling there.

I love my own people, and I love my own church beyond all else ; but it always comes to me with something of sadness, when I am abroad, that as a nation and as a church we are far, far behind others in our outward acts of reverence and devotion ; and is it not by outward acts that we show the loving, reverent spirit that ought to dwell within us ?

Why cannot we, at home, lay our burdens down—the many burdens of our weary work-a-day life, and spend a little time, as we pass God's house, within its hallowed walls ?

We could not stay as long a time as we wished in Mayence ; “ we cannot do everything,” was a remark that fell very frequently from Cousin Rosa's

lips, and we realized the truth of her words as each day came and went.

Yes, through all life's journey there must always be something left undone, something always to be wished for, until the end of all our longings, and all our wishes, comes in the perpetual presence of the great Eternal Love, which alone is satisfying.

But I must not moralize ; we have to hurry to the station and get our tickets for Basel. I will not describe the railway journey ; those who know it are familiar with the loveliness of the Black Forest scenery, and to those who do not, a description of what we saw from the windows of a railway carriage would not be interesting.

Cousin Rosa kept us *au fait* of all the places we passed. A German woman in our carriage ate veal cutlets, with the aid of her fingers and a penknife—with more appetite than refinement. We got into clouds of dust, and purchased quantities of fruit to counteract the tickling in our throats. There were peeps of exquisite scenery ; and when I have said this, I have in a few words described our eight hours' journey.

We were very glad to get out of the train at Basel, and I think our hearts beat high with delight when Cousin Rosa, as we stood upon the platform, said "Switzerland !" in telling tones.

This sentiment was original—not taken from Baedeker or Murray. We all knew, of course, that we *were* in Switzerland, but we were, perhaps, too tired to be ecstatic on any subject, and were thankful to our friend for reminding us that we ought to be delighted.

Our spirits rose to their proper height after we had dined comfortably at the hotel of the Drei Könige, in a room overlooking the Rhine, which at Basel is of a bright green colour, and splashes and dashes on its course in a noisy current, which we had not before noticed, and which charmed us very much.

After dinner we walked about the quiet streets towards the cathedral, which is built of deep red sandstone, and stands above the quaint old irregular town in a very picturesque manner.

The doors of the church were closed (you generally find this in the Protestant cathedrals abroad), so we strolled down to the river's bank, and arranged our proceedings for the morrow.

We were to go to Zurich, *en route* for Lucerne. It is not the most direct way, but in my Swiss experience of seventeen years before, the sun only shone upon the Lake of Zurich, the whole time we were away; so I had pleasant reminiscences of it, and longed to see it again.

We were only to spend a few hours there, and be at Lucerne by the next evening. So we looked out upon the hills, and we said in a kind of chorus, "To-morrow, all being well, we shall see the snow!" and then we went to bed, too tired out, even to dream of the glories to which we were drawing so near.

CHAPTER V.

FROM BASEL TO ZURICH AND THE RIGI—
AMONGST THE CLOUDS—OUR FIRST MOUNTAIN
ASCENT—GLIMPSES OF THE SNOW.

EARLY the next morning we were in the train on our way to Zurich. There had been a good deal of confusion at the Basel station, and we thought that we should have been left behind ; for Cousin Rosa had forgotten one of the Baedekers, and had to go back to the hotel for it, and arrived rather late and very warm, but perfectly calm—calmer considerably than the rest of us, who had lost no such precious possession, and had been obliged to endure the anxiety of watching for her return. However, “ All’s well that ends well ;” Baedeker was found, and we caught the train.

The Swiss carriages are made like the American ones, with a passage down the centre, and double rows of seats, which hold two on each side, and small

platforms with steps for ingress or egress outside each carriage.

A guard keeps continually popping in at the door, when you least expect him, and looks at your tickets, and takes a friendly glance round to see that all is right.



It was not all quite right with me, for the four sat together at one end of the carriage, and I found myself in a seat next a remarkably stout old lady, whose large basket ran into my arm, and opposite a young man, from whose pipe perfect volumes of smoke issued.

He seemed to think it was all right, and looked happy and good tempered, and I tried to do the same; then the guard came up and put his pipe against the young man's pipe, by way of setting it alight, they both laughed, and I dared not say a word against the fumes of tobacco, for I knew that there was only one non-smoking carriage in the train, and that one was already most uncomfortably crowded.

Before long the young man engaged in quite a long conversation with me about the delights of London, where he once stayed for "two weeks." He puffed between whiles, and added by way of a finale, "You no smoke much in London."

I said, "No, not as you do abroad." He seemed to think this complimentary, and smoked more vigorously than ever, as though to show me what foreigners *could* do in that line.

We certainly do put up with things in foreign lands that we would not tolerate at home. I think that this is one of the great advantages of taking a holiday abroad; it roots up old prejudices, and makes us more tolerant and more patient towards others.

Before the end of the two hours' journey, I could almost have brought myself to believe that

travelling under such circumstances was the height of felicity.

It was all so lovely and so fair to look upon on that bright summer's morning. We took our last look at the foaming Rhine at the little town of Rheinfelden, and then we went very slowly up a steep ascent, passing through luxuriant vineyards, until we came to the summit of a hill, and looked down upon the lovely valley of the Aar and the mountains of the Bernese Oberland in the distance.

Our enthusiasm began to rise. No need for Cousin Rosa to announce now that we were in Switzerland; each moment's increasing beauty forced the fact upon us.

The young man with the pipe was amused at my delight, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "Ah, but zat is nosing; you must yet wait."

Now we came to the confluence of the Reuss and the Aar, and then the train puffed slowly along the banks of the Limmat, and in a few minutes more we were at Zurich.

We left our luggage at the station, and made our way to the Hotel Bauer au Lac, ordered our luncheon, and went out and looked upon the blue waters of the lake, and at the bright green mountains rising up in the distance.

After luncheon, nothing would do but a row in

one of the little boats. We were all delighted, with almost childish delight ; and when the half-hour's row was over, we set off towards the town, visited the Höhe Promenade, with its splendid avenue of lime trees, then made our way to the Terrace of the Polytechnic, where we got a magnificent view of the curious old town, which is divided by the river Limmat into two parts, the *Grosse Stadt* on the right bank, and the *Kleine Stadt* on the left bank.



We were at the railway station once more. We had decided upon going up by the railway to the Uetliberg, the northernmost point of the Albis range.

We none of us liked the idea of a train going up a Swiss mountain, but time was an object. We wanted to see the magnificent view from the top, and there was no other way of doing it.

We got into the carriage, and looked wonderingly at the engine, which is placed *behind* the train. We went slowly on through pleasant shady woods, catching an occasional view of Zurich between the trees, and in about half an hour we were at the terminus.

We walked for about ten minutes up a gentle ascent, past the Hotel Uetliberg, up to the top of the hill (we called it a mountain *then*, it sounded so grand), and then the whole beauty of the view burst upon us suddenly.

Beneath us was the lovely lake, and the green hills around it ; in the distance were the mountains of the Oberland, capped with the eternal snow.

We stood and gazed upon the scene, and there came to all of us the longing to get nearer to the glory which we now saw only from afar.

I looked at my watch. "We must have some coffee," I said.

"Don't talk of coffee," answered Kate ; "I'm sure we don't want any."

"Yes, we do ; we have another journey before us."

Well, we had the coffee, still looking at the view, and Mary remarked, "What a sunrise there will be to-morrow. Oh, if we could but be on the Rigi !"

"I don't care to go up the Rigi," said Margaret, "it is too dreadful !"

"Too dreadful! What do you mean?"

"Why, listen to this. I have just picked up a piece of last Saturday's *Standard*. 'Two thousand people went up the Rigi by rail on Thursday. You might have imagined yourself at Greenwich fair.'"

"But we could not go back to England and say we had not *done* the Rigi," said Cousin Rosa.

"Why not?" asked Margaret.

"Well, I don't know; but it would sound so odd."

Now, Margaret rather prides herself upon being perfectly indifferent to public opinion, and I saw an expression upon her face that did not look favourable to the Rigi.

"Fancy looking upon such scenes with two thousand people of the Greenwich fair class around you," she said.

An idea—the sequel will prove whether it was a bright one—came to me. We had been so perfectly unanimous in our inclinations so far, that the smallest difference of opinion as to our proceedings, alarmed me. I felt nervous as I laid my scheme before my friends. I began in solemn tones:

"The weather in Switzerland is very variable."

This trite remark was received in silence, and I went on.

"By to-morrow it may have changed."

"Oh, don't hint at such a thing, please."

"My hinting at it will not bring the change," I answered. "I only say it is possible. And there is no doubt," I continued boldly, "that we ought to go up the Rigi. There is also no doubt that the two thousand people would be an objection."

Here Margaret and Cousin Rosa both said, "Yes, certainly," and Mary and Kate looked blank.

"But," I continued, "comparatively few people *sleep* on the mountain, comparatively few see the sun rise ; so my proposition is that we change our plans, and go off to Zug, instead of to Lucerne, by the next train, and sleep on the Rigi to-night ; only, we must send our luggage on, and just take our 'hold-alls' with the requisites for the night."

There was a burst of applause. The next minute a look of grave anxiety appeared upon Mary's face.

"That awful old man," she said, "that Peter Hopkins."

I turned round, expecting to see the geologist standing on the Uetliberg.

"Where is he ?" I asked.

"Nowhere. At least, he is not here ; but ever since he possessed himself of my bag it will not lock ; and there are heaps of things in it that I would not lose for worlds, and I cannot send it on."

"Let it go by the post," I said; "it will be safe then. They will seal it up in some wonderful way; and, indeed, it is too large to take up the Rigi."

"Very well," said poor Mary submissively; "if you are sure it will be all right, I suppose it *must* go."

I lauded up the luggage post to a great extent. Then we hurried off as fast as we could, and found when we reached the station that we had just five minutes in which to make all arrangements; but everybody was pleased, and the journey from Zurich to Zug was full of delight.

There were some Germans in the carriage with us, who had never been in Switzerland before, and they were loud in their exclamations at the marvellous beauty that came to us at every turn of the road, and they must have thought us a strangely undemonstrative set, because we said so little about what we all *felt* so much. It seems to me that such scenery as this comes as a kind of new revelation, a something that we had not known before; may it not be called a fuller realization of that Love which "Created everything beautiful in His time?"

We were getting nearer to the snow mountains each minute. On one side the Bernese Alps and grand old Pilatus rose up before us; on the other, the Engelberg Alps, surmounted by the Titlis, lifted

their lofty heads. We and our German companions all crowded together upon the little platform outside the carriage, and strained our eyes to see all we could see, and Cousin Rosa read out the names of the mountains; but I don't think we cared to hear them then. We bowed with reverent hearts to the great whole; details would do afterwards, we thought.

We were at Zug now; out of the train on to the steamer; and soon we were crossing the lake. The richly wooded banks were reflected in the azure waters, and before us stood the Rigi, looking very grand and majestic with the soft shadows of evening falling upon it from base to summit. We did not lose sight of the dear snow mountains; we felt that we and they were going to keep company, we hoped for many days to come. We landed at Arth, and Margaret talked of *walking* up the Rigi; but we told her she would be benighted, and so persuaded her to get into the train. Our German fellow-travellers tried to persuade us that it was too late to ascend the mountain that night, and advised us to sleep at Arth, and go up early in the morning; but this might have brought us dangerously near the "Greenwich fair" element, so we did not take their advice, and thankful indeed we were afterwards that we had not done so.

CHAPTER VI.

A NIGHT ON THE RIGI—ECONOMY FRUSTRATED—
UNTIL THE DAWNING—WORSHIPPERS OF
THE RISING SUN.



BY seven o'clock we had taken our places in the train. In the weeks that were to come, many new revelations of grandeur and of beauty rose up before us, but I do not think anything ever exceeded in loveliness that evening's prospect as we went up the Rigi by rail.

I don't believe that a thought of the cockneyism of the thing entered even into Margaret's mind, the word was so utterly at variance with the scene before us.

There was the Lake of Zug below ; the green trees, which were lit up now with the golden glory of the setting sun, reflected in its azure depths ; there was the range of mountains, bathed in the crimson and purple hues of the day's departing glory, appearing ever and anon in the distance. We were all in such a state of delight that we literally could not speak ; I think we should have forgotten that we were in a railway carriage if we had not occasionally felt the queerness of the situation. The little squeaking engine, which was behind, gave us a kind of tilt—and no marvel, for we were going up a nearly perpendicular incline—and up we mounted, with jerky, slow, spasmodic little puffs, until suddenly we arrived at a station, and then came a somewhat alarming bump. There was a good deal of noise and bustle and chattering, and off we tilted again, until, as we neared the Kulm, I awoke out of the most delicious dream-land, to a sense of my duties and responsibilities as "Mrs. Cook."

Our "train" consisted of one carriage, with glass at the two ends. I should think it was capable of holding about fifty persons. There were but twelve in it on that evening, including our five selves, and I was hopeful as to our prospects of accommodation at the hotel.

A handsome youth, in a blue blouse and a Swiss hat, with a piece of Edelweiss in it, jumped into the carriage. His hands were full of lovely Alpine roses, with which he presented us ; and he informed us that there were very few people sleeping on the Kulm that night. This was satisfactory—no chance of the Greenwich fair on a Swiss mountain. Whilst I talked German to the lad, my friends were arranging a little plan of their own, which they very soon propounded to me.

“We are none of us going to bed,” they said.

“What nonsense !” I exclaimed.

“Well, we might miss the sunrise ; and it is better to sit up.”

“I must write my journal,” said Cousin Rosa. “I cannot leave it a day longer ; I am getting quite confused as it is.”

“Suppose we have one large double-bedded room,” suggested practical Mary, “and just rest by turns ; would it not be a great saving ? And it is ridiculous to pay some exorbitant price for rooms and not use them. For of course we shall not undress ; I am sure *I* shan’t.”

The idea seemed rather a good one, and we agreed to carry it out ; Cousin Rosa adhering to her determination of writing, until the horn blew, which always announced the rising of the sun on the Rigi.

We got out of the train, fearing that all those glorious hues would have faded away, but there in the west, instead of the darkness of night, was the gorgeous after-glow resting upon the mountains.

It was hard to turn away from it, and mount the steps of the hotel, and confront the landlord and ask him if he had a large double-bedded room for us.



He eyed us suspiciously; he did not condescend to answer my question. "*Ici on paie par personne,*" he said, with a glance so withering that I felt completely shrivelled up. He called two or three

chamber-maids to the front, and gave us into their charge. We followed them meekly, were shown into three rooms, which were evidently considered the correct thing for our party, and so Mary's dream of economy in a double-bedded apartment vanished.

We could not help laughing heartily over the scene, which had taken about two minutes to enact; and then we went into the restaurant below, had our supper, and, as soon as we could, we were out again upon the terrace. The after-glow was fast disappearing now, but here and there was just a little spark of red, lingering upon the western horizon, as though the great monarch of the day would not leave the mountains, without something of his light. And as we were looking and wondering at the unusual sight, one by one the stars came out, and then the moon shone over mountain, lake, and valley; and the clock struck eleven when we went to our rooms.

Cousin Rosa betook herself to her journal; and I persuaded the others to lie down, promising to rouse them all in good time—for I can pretty well count upon awaking at any hour I please.

I got up at three o'clock, and looked out of the window. There was nothing to be seen; everything was not in darkness, but in shadow.

"Until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away," I murmured, and I stood where I was, thinking of the great shadow that *must* come, and the great dawn that we hope *will* come to all of us ; and then, in the faint dim distance, I saw a little thread of silver light.

"Make haste," I said, putting in my head at the doors of the other rooms, and finding, to my satisfaction, that Cousin Rosa was very fast asleep, so fast indeed that I had to give her a friendly poke and say, "The sun will rise soon."

She jumped up and said, in dreamy tones, "Don't take the blankets ; it is not allowed." I was already wrapped in my warmest shawl, and had no such intention ; and the next minute Cousin Rosa told me that she had been dreaming that Margaret had had to pay a heavy fine for appropriating a blanket as a wrap.

We were the first, in all the hotel, to go out into the chill morning air. Before long the cow-horn sounded, shrill and clear, inside and outside the house, shrill and loud enough to awaken the soundest sleeper.

Soon, out tumbled everybody. I own that for the most part they were objects—their usual attire put on anyhow, and the supplementary attire of shawls, rugs, and, in one case, a real *bond fide*

blanket, imparting a grotesque appearance to almost all the would-be worshippers of the rising sun.

We had not undressed, and we had washed our faces, and brushed our hair, and I think we looked



much as usual, always allowing, of course, that it is possible that we looked *objects* at all times.

Yes, it *was* very ludicrous ; and the people talked very loud, and an American lady standing next me, and looking at the widening streak of silver light, and at a few rosy clouds above it, said, "She saw nothing in it ; it wasn't worth getting up for."

We are told that there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous. Fortunately, there is

another side of the picture ; we can reverse the old saying, and there is another step that may be taken, *i.e.*, from the ridiculous to the sublime, and that step we took now. A few minutes more, and the whole of the tourists might have been wrapped up in blankets, and had their heads tied up in pillows (one old gentleman, by the way, had tried that experiment), for all we cared ; for the shadows had all flown away, not one of them was left now, and the sun had risen.

We heard afterwards that the sunrise that morning was the most beautiful one that had been seen on the Rigi that year. I am not going to describe it ; I am not going to say anything about the lakes and the mountains, and give you all their names, and respective situations. You would not understand it if I did. If you have any desire to try whether you could in any way imagine it, take a guide-book and a chart, and you have my best wishes for your success.

It seemed to me as I stood there—and I know some of the others said very much the same about it afterwards, when we talked it all over, with something that was half awe, half delight—that a Divine Hand touched each mountain and peak, and brought it into the light, and caused His sun to shine upon it in its beauty and its glory.

The rosy hues of morning fell upon the white snow with a kind of wistful, tender light—a light that seemed to belong more to heaven than to earth. We could but bow our heads in adoration to Him who gave us the sun to be our light by day.

It seemed to speak of love, and truth, and hope overshadowing all our lives.

We went back to the hotel, refreshed ourselves a little, then had our breakfast. For the remainder of the morning we wandered about, revelling in the sunshine, and the beauty and the grandeur of all around us, and picking the gentian and the sweet Alpine roses. The four all wished to spend another night upon the Rigi, and to see another sunrise.

“Let us have the bill first,” I prudently said.

Well, it came, and it was by no means moderate—very high, in fact—eight francs a bed ; although I must say the food in the restaurant attached to the hotel was good and reasonable. .

“We cannot always be sitting up for sunrises,” I said. “I shall take home four spectres, if I let you do it, and you will never one of you be allowed to come to Switzerland again.”

So they gave up the idea with a very good grace, and in the afternoon we walked slowly down to Vitznau, where we took the steamer for Lucerne.

Before we were half-way across the lake, angry clouds were chasing each other along the blue sky, Pilatus was in a mist, so was the Rigi. We landed at Lucerne in a drenching shower, and went to the Hôtel National, very glad that the Rigi bill had warned us to leave the mountain. I went to the post and got our longed-for letters from home; found, to my joy, that Mary's Gladstone and the rest of our belongings were safe. We agreed that Sunday should be a quiet day with us, and on Monday morning, all being well, we should start by the first boat for Alpnacht, and thence take carriage over the Brunig to Brienz, stop at Giessbach, and then make our way to Interlachen.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM LUCERNE OVER THE BRUNIG TO GIESSBACH
AND INTERLACHEN: SUNDAY MORNING—
A STUDY OF CHARACTER—THE QUEEN OF
THE ALPS.

WE inquired whether there was an early celebration of the Holy Communion at the English church, and were told that there was none. The English service is held in a chapel, which really belongs to the Swiss Protestants, and during the months of June, July, August, and September clergymen are sent by the Colonial and Continental Society to take the Sunday duty.

And here may I be excused for saying one word about our dear English church abroad. I have seen services as reverently performed as any one could desire, but I have seen others where it has seemed the endeavour of the officiating clergyman to contrast the simplicity of the English church with the gorgeousness of the Roman, and in so

doing they run the risk of neglecting the commonest outward signs and acts of reverence.

It would have been a comfort to us all to have gone to our own early service on that Sunday morning, but it was not to be.

It was pouring with rain, and after breakfast we went to the cathedral, which, with its two slender towers, stood on a slight eminence at the end of the quay, just behind our hotel. It was crowded in all parts, and I could not help noticing the great number of working-men who were there.

There was a sermon in German, an extremely good one, and I felt quite proud of myself for being able to understand every word of it. It was on Christian love and charity, and there was not one syllable in it which might not have been spoken in one of our own churches.

The music at the Mass was grand and yet simple, and I do not think I ever saw a more reverent congregation.

The clouds of the evening before had all disappeared, when we left the cathedral. The sun was shining upon the lake, which most people think the most beautiful in Europe. We strolled along the shore, beneath the shady trees, and we were told that the English church was so crowded that it was no use to think of gaining admission ; so we

strolled on further, and stood and looked about at the mountains, with their covering of snow, the summer sun lighting up the pure white most brilliantly.

We walked upon the quaint old covered bridges, and saw the green waters of the Reuss dashing out of the lake to wend their course amid the distant valleys ; and we paid the far-famed Lion a visit, and all agreed that in wood and stone he was not done justice to, nothing but the carving out of the rock itself, after Thorwaldsen's design, appeals in the least to one's sympathy.

I don't care for statues as a rule, but that brave old fellow, protecting a shield, and perishing in the attempt, brings to one's mind the heroic Swiss guards who had died doing their duty, defending the palace of a strange land.

We went back to our hotel, and did a little quiet Sunday reading, and gathered up the events that had passed since we left home, only just one short week before. Oh, how long it seemed, and how pleasant it had all been ! Not one single drawback to our enjoyment. The drawback to *me* came that very afternoon ; a letter from a friend told me of the death of a young girl of whom I was very fond, whom I had seen, in all the full bright vigour of her youth, only a fortnight before.

I have never yet gone away and given myself up to thorough enjoyment, but that something has come to pull me up as it were, to lead my thoughts even from the beauties of this most beautiful world to the land where shadows cease.

We went to the English afternoon service, and I cannot say that we were edified. The clergyman *preached* the prayers, and *read* his sermon, in dreary, monotonous tones. The singing was good of its kind, the chants very florid and uncongregational.

It pelted with rain again in the evening. Our bedrooms were small and stuffy, and, somewhat against our will, we took refuge in the salon. Here it was that we met Pussy and Wussy, of whom more anon, and that Margaret's delight in the study of character was certainly gratified.

A very sweet-looking old lady, and a lady-like young one, were sitting on a sofa near me, and we entered into conversation. Miss Lennox and I discovered that we owned some mutual friends, and of course our acquaintance progressed rapidly from that moment, in the hothouse fashion that acquaintances abroad always progress.

The dear old lady, Mrs. Fleming, was no relation of Miss Lennox ; but she *had* two nieces with her, as well as her young friend.

A few minutes more, and these nieces appeared.

It was an astonishment to me then, it has been a puzzle to me ever since, how it was that any relationship could exist between those three.

"The girls," so Pussy and Wussy called themselves (I should have hesitated before applying the title to them), were both small. They wore very short skirts, long tight-fitting jackets, high-heeled boots, and fringed hair. I believe it is correct to say that fringes are *worn*, which means, I suppose, that they are not of natural growth.

Wussy was the best of the girls. Before we parted, we had all got to the lengths of pitying her.

Pussy saw me talking to her aunt and Miss Lennox, and she instantly joined us, and thus addressed me :

"Don't you think this music profane on a Sunday evening ?"

Somebody was playing a sonata of Beethoven's most exquisitely, and I simply remarked that "it was very beautiful."

"Ah yes, I know ; but I only like sacred music on Sundays. We always sing 'Hold the Fort,' and those kind of things on Sunday evening at home. I can't stand this" (it was Beethoven's "Hallelujah Chorus" now) ; "I shall go into the other room."

Off she went, but she soon came back again.

"I heard you speaking German this afternoon," she said ; "you speak it remarkably well."

I might have felt gratified at the compliment had I not heard Pussy announcing to some one, only a few minutes before, that the sermon at the cathedral that morning had been in "bad French."

I was not best pleased to hear that Mrs. Fleming's party intended to leave by the early boat the next morning for Alpnacht and the Brunig. I hoped that Pussy would not pursue the acquaintance which she had begun somewhat persistently. Before the evening was over, I was doomed to disappointment. A regular onslaught was made upon me by the little personage.

"It would be very pleasant if we could get a very large carriage and go over the Brunig together," she said.

I did not know what to answer. I did not think that Pussy would add to the charm of any excursion ; but Mrs. Fleming and Miss Lennox came up at that moment, both of them looking considerably worried, eagerly echoing Pussy's wish, and it struck me that it might be salutary discipline to make a little part of our holiday an opportunity of making the holiday of others somewhat more enjoyable.

Margaret and Mary also came up and joined us,

and it was settled that if a carriage could be found large enough to hold us all, we were to share it.

"You see," said Pussy, "it is as well to do things as cheaply as we can, although of course I have my cheque-book with me, and I can draw to any amount for Wussy and myself."

I own that at that moment I felt *wicked*. Why had Pussy a cheque-book, whilst I had not the ghost of such a thing? Why could she draw to any amount, whilst we *must* go home as soon as our small amount of spare money was exhausted?

The evening came to an end at last, and we went to bed rather in a depressed state of mind, for the rain was pattering against our windows as if it never meant to cease, and we felt the chances of its clearing by the morning somewhat hopeless. At midnight I got up to look out of the window. The rain had ceased, the moon was shedding its soft silvery light over the calm, peaceful lake, and the stars were shining with an intense brightness.

I could have stood there for a long time, and gazed upon the scene, if I had not been so sleepy. Do not consider me a heretic, when I say that drowsiness overcame poetry, and I went back to bed; only to be aroused in the morning by a loud thundering at the door, and to find the sun shining brilliantly into the room, and Pilatus with his cap

and collar both on—at least, I suppose he was thus attired, for not one scrap of his lofty head was to be seen. And this “is a sure sign of a fine day.”

We all met in the *salle à manger*, Pussy, in high spirits, advising us to make a good breakfast. She and Wussy had already sat down to a substantial meal; we contented ourselves with coffee and rolls, and went off to the steamer.

Our first sail on the Lake of Lucerne in fine weather; and oh, how we enjoyed it! Cousin Rosa did show-woman, and pointed out all the mountains as we passed them, or saw them in the distance. I daresay she was right, but I have my doubts on the subject.

The steamer left the Lake of Lucerne for the little Lake of Alpnacht, and in a few minutes more we reached the landing-stage; and then began a scene of bustle, confusion and chattering which was very amusing and entirely new to all of us.

I made friends with the “boots” from the hotel, told him we wanted breakfast, and a carriage that would hold nine ladies. Was there such a vehicle to be had?

Certainly; there were *voitures* to accommodate any number, from two to twelve persons. I made a bargain with the coachman, whom “boots” presented to me in the most courtier-like fashion. Then we

went to the comfortable primitive inn, had what was really our luncheon, and got into the most wonderful-looking carriage, which seemed entirely composed of hoods—two in front, two in the centre, and one at the back.



Pussy and Wussy at once took their places on the front seat. It was a little way of theirs always to look out for themselves—at least, Pussy did it, and Wussy followed suit.

After we had gone on for about an hour, Pussy said she was sure I should like to change places with her.

I saw a smile on Miss Lennox's face, which I did not quite understand. I entered into the full meaning of these smiles before we parted company.

I answered Pussy's offer by saying that I was very comfortable where I was, and that I could not think of giving her the trouble of moving.

A few minutes more, and the carriage stopped, and the little woman was standing on the step.

"Some one really must change places with me," she said ; " I *am* so dreadfully uncomfortable."

Poor Mrs. Fleming looked very disconcerted, and I think pity for her made us all start up and offer to move ; but Miss Lennox insisted upon being the victim, and took her place next to Wussy, in Pussy's uncomfortable seat. It was not in the least bit uncomfortable, I believe, but Pussy had a way of liking a little pleasing variety, and did not scruple to indulge her whims at every one's expense.

Whenever we talked of her afterwards, in connection with the few days in which we travelled together, we always said that if we read of such a person in a book, we should say, "What exaggeration !" and this is what I expect you will say when you read the little sketch of a seemingly very exaggerated character, which comes into this part of our tour.

We enjoyed our drive over the Brunig very much,

but I think we were just a little disappointed in the scenery. It was wooded, and green and lovely, but I fancy we were craving for the snow ; and it was only when we arrived at the top of the Pass that the white-capped giants of the Oberland were to be seen in the distance, whilst at our feet lay the valley of Meyringen, smiling in the sunshine. We reached the Lake of Brienz about four o'clock, and hired a little boat to take us over to Giessbach, to see the Falls.

Every one goes to see those Falls of Giessbach, where the water comes tumbling down in such a marvellous fashion, and where the wooden bridges cross and re-cross the stream at various distances. And you can stand on one of these bridges, if you like, and enjoy a shower bath ; or, if you are of a frolicsome disposition, you can run away from the water, escaping with just a tiny splash, which adds to the fun of the thing. Pussy and Wussy indulged in the latter amusement, and appeared delighted, both with the Falls and themselves.

We all of us walked up the hill, and then had some coffee at the hotel ; and I think there was a very decided inclination on the part of Pussy to spend the night at Giessbach, so that we might see the Falls illuminated. Poor dear Mrs. Fleming appeared inclined to give in, so, of course, did

Wussy. They were free to do as they liked, but we five, and Miss Lennox, were strong in our resistance of the project.

"We might like to see the leaping waters by the light of the moon ; but to see them lit with a thousand coloured lights was not in our line," we said ; and Pussy, for some reason or other, seemed determined not to leave us.

An American gentleman had told her that "he had seen nothing in Europe like the illumination of the Giessbach," she said ; but if twenty American gentlemen had answered for the beauty of the scene, we should have been equally unbending in our decision. Seven o'clock found us on board the lake steamer, bound for Bönigen, whence we reached Interlachen by train in about ten minutes.

The little Swiss town was very crowded, gay, and hot and stuffy on that August evening.

Smartly dressed ladies were sitting at the doors of the hotels ; and gentlemen, in the newest fashions in the way of tourists' costumes, were loitering and lounging about ; and dance-music sounded upon the breeze. Well, it was very like an English watering-place, except that there were no niggers to be seen ; and I did not like it ; we none of us liked it, except Pussy and Wussy. Had there been any means of leaving it that night, I think we

should have done so ; as it was, we resolved not to go to one of the fashionable hotels, but to a *pension*, where we had been told we could get most comfortable beds, a few minutes' walk from the town.

We found that we could all be accommodated, and right glad were we to get both food and rest.

Pussy chose what she considered the best room in the house for Wussy and herself ; Margaret, Mary, and myself had two smaller rooms upstairs.

We were just settling ourselves into them, when up rushed Pussy.

"Those are such nice rooms downstairs," she said ; "only I cannot sleep on the ground floor. I forgot it *was* the ground floor when I chose them. Will you change with me?"

Out of the window of the room we were in I had caught a glimpse of something in the distance, intensely, dazzlingly white, the moon lighting it up with a radiance that I can express in no other word than "holy"—so pure, so beautiful was the Queen of the Alps, coming from between the wooded hills, in all her grandeur and stateliness.

Was it very selfish of me to answer Pussy's request by saying that we could not move downstairs? that Mary was not a good sleeper, and

that she really needed an undisturbed night's rest ?
I hope not.

I tried to be civil to Pussy, but if anything rubs
me up the wrong way, it is selfishness ; and never



The Jungfrau by moonlight

yet, in all the experience of my life—and it is
getting to be a long life—had I met any one so
glaringly, unscrupulously selfish as our little
travelling-companion for the time being.

Well, she managed to get her own way. Wussy and Miss Lennox were sent down to the ground floor, and had a very comfortable night, they said, whilst Pussy shared her aunt's room upstairs.

I shall never forget waking up from a most refreshing sleep very early the next morning, and drawing back the window-curtain, in a state, I am afraid, of semi-slumber, and looking out upon the Jungfrau, more lovely than ever in the glory of the sun—"whiter than snow" in the azure light, with a kind of halo of gold and crimson round her summit.

I cannot describe it—it was too beautiful for any poor words of mine ; but we forgave Interlachen all the heat and the noise and the element of fashion, which had so troubled us on our arrival, because of the pure virgin loveliness of her Jungfrau.

CHAPTER VIII.

INTERLACHEN — LAUTERBRUNNEN — MÜRREN —
GRINDELWALD : ALPENSTOCKS — PUSSY ON
HORSEBACK — A MOUNTAIN VILLAGE — OUR
FIRST SIGHT OF A GLACIER.

WE had an early breakfast, and our very accommodating landlord had found a grand carriage for us, and there he stood, with nine alpenstocks ready for our use.

This looked like business. Our mountaineering work was to begin, and the prospect was most exhilarating.

The alpenstocks were only a loan. They would be in our way afterwards, our friendly host said, and I quite endorse his sentiments on the subject.

There is a certain importance in the possession of the long staff, but it is very much in your way, unless you really want it.

We were bound for Lauterbrunnen and Mürren,

and the nine miles' drive up the lovely valley in the early morning air, was simply delicious.

Woods on each side of us, and fir trees growing in all kinds of improbable places on the steep, craggy rocks ; a rushing, foaming river—the Lüttschine—leaping down the valley ; waterfalls without number coming from the heights above, like gleams of silver, athwart the dark frowning rocks ; and, to crown it all, the snow mountains sparkling in the sunshine, and the Jungfrau always before us, in her grand, stately beauty.

I sat on the box with a most talkative coachman ; heard the whole history of his wife and seven children, and of their life amid the snows of winter ; and when we reached Lauterbrunnen, the whole party seemed in the highest possible spirits.

A discussion arose as to our climbing powers. Were we capable of the three hours' walk up to Mürren ?

"Certainly," said Pussy. "Why, it's nothing ! a baby could walk up such a hill as that ! I certainly shall not think of riding, and I am sure Wussy will not."

Poor Wussy ! if she had wished it ever so much, she would not have dared express her wishes. So the sisters walked off together, to begin the ascent, whilst the rest of us waited behind, and secured

three horses for Mrs. Fleming, Cousin Rosa, and whoever else wanted an occasional lift, to mount in turn.

I felt pretty sure of my pedestrian powers, as well as of Mary's and Margaret's, but I had my doubts about Kate.

Well, we started, alpenstocks in hand ; Mrs. Fleming, Cousin Rosa, and Miss Lennox on their steeds.

The first part of the ascent is the worst. The sun was intensely hot, and for half an hour after we left Lauterbrunnen the path was steep and rough.

Mrs. Fleming did not like the "jogging," she said, and insisted upon getting off her horse. Just at this juncture, who should we come upon but Pussy, leaning exhausted against a bank.

"I think I *will* ride for a few minutes," she said, and up she mounted ; and it is a fact worthy of record, that we saw no more of our little friend until three hours afterwards when we reached the summit of Mürren ; then she ran down a bank, and said in reproachful tones, "What an age you have been !"

The situation was too ludicrous. Mary tried to give a sharp answer, but laughed outright in the middle of her retort, and I really do not believe that one single qualm, arising from her appropriation of the horse, disturbed Pussy's serenity.

But this is a digression. It *was* a hot walk up, and *I*, the chaperone of the party, walked the whole way. I felt proud of myself, for I am not, as a rule, fond of long walks; but we seemed, as we got higher and higher, to be swallowing draughts of atmospheric champagne—perhaps I ought not to say this, for I am a pledged abstainer,



Pussy ON HORSEBACK

but I cannot find any other simile—and the ever-growing beauty was almost intoxicating.

We went up zigzag paths, and then came a piece of flat, green, mossy ground all covered with ferns and flowers—such a rest to our weary feet; then

on again into the rough path, and before long another resting-place ; and at every turn, as we rose higher and higher, the Jungfrau was still before us, and by-and-by the queen was not alone in her



ON THE WAY TO MÜRREN.

glory—on each side of her were her courtiers, the grand snow mountains and glaciers of the Oberland, the White Monk and the Eiger, and the Black Monk, and the Rothhorn, and the Breithorn, and a host of other horns, all of which a guide-book will describe to you, and the names of which Cousin

Rosa announced to us in very tremulous tones, caused by the jogging motion of her steed.

We fell in with numbers of boys and girls on the way, carrying Alpine strawberries up to the hotels. It is superfluous, perhaps, to add that they did not take up the full quantity, with which they started.

Mürren is a tiny mountain village ; but there are now two large hotels there, which, during the short season, are generally crowded with visitors.

We were very glad of some luncheon, and then we went out again to feast our eyes upon the glorious scene.

We *saw* and *heard* several avalanches. They look like fine white clouds of dust rolling down the mountain side, and scattering themselves into the air ; they sound like cannons, rather small and distant. It is difficult to realize what they have done and can do, in the destruction of life and property ; but, of course, these avalanches that we saw were not the worst kind. Those which consist of snow which "blinds," and does not break into dust, are the fatal ones, rushing down the sides of the mountains with a great smothering thud, and burying both man and beast in their dread descent.

As we sat and looked at the glories of the Alps, quite suddenly a mist came over the mountains, and every one said that it would not clear off again

that day. Two or three Germans persisted in starting for the Schilthorn ; we met one of them the next day, and he informed us that "the mist was curious," but they saw nothing else. The mist was "curious" enough at Mürren, without the trouble of ascending the higher peak, to witness a like effect.

Just behind the hotel stands the pretty little English church, designed by the great architect, Street, who has so recently been taken from us. There is no other place of worship in the village, and the services are reverently conducted on Sundays and Holy Days during the summer months, and are a great comfort to those who take up their residence amongst the snow mountains for four or five weeks at a time.

We had dismissed our horses, preferring to trust entirely to our legs in the descent ; and we reached Lauterbrunnen by a different path, somewhat more precipitous than the one by which we had gone up to Mürren. New loveliness rose before us at each moment. The mist was only on the mountain-tops, pasture land, valleys and waterfalls, backed by the snow mountains were before us as we made our way to the little village of Stechelberg, where we had ordered the carriage to meet us.

It was six o'clock when we reached Lauter-

brunnen, and walked to see the far-famed Staubbach.

Cousin Rosa read : " This brook, which is never of great volume, decreases so much in summer as sometimes to disappoint the expectant traveller." As we, " expectant travellers," stood before the little thin stream of the waterfall, we *were* disappointed. I will say no more.

We went on, to visit a wood-carver's shop, and invested in an extraordinary collection of paper-knives, penholders, etc., which were intended to delight, and *did* delight, the hearts of friends of all classes and ages, at home.

Two hours later we were at Interlachen, and very soon afterwards in bed, for we were to start for Grindelwald early the next morning. I did not draw my blinds down—I wanted my first waking glance to be upon the Jungfrau; and there she was, when the sun, streaming full upon my face, caused me to open my eyes.

I called to the others to look at her. She was just as beautiful as the day before, only I think we loved her better and appreciated her more, upon a better acquaintance.

At eight o'clock we were *en voiture*, alpenstocks and all. I imagine we thought we were going to walk upon the ice, and should need them.

The drive was beautiful—very much the same character as that to Lauterbrunnen, only we had the Wetterhorn instead of the Jungfrau before us, and our love was given to the latter.

Pussy was very anxious to go to the Lower Glacier, and the rest of us thought the Upper one the better. There was a little confusion about this when we started, and, as the sisters had insisted upon remaining at the hotel to write a letter, we were on our way to the Upper Glacier, when we saw them flying after us, gesticulating and screaming that we were quite wrong. I tried to assure them that we were right, and that the men who were carrying the *chaise à porteur*, which we had persuaded Mrs. Fleming to take, strongly advised the Upper Glacier; but Pussy was not to be convinced. She tried to argue with the men; they did not understand her. She told me I was unkind and cruel not to speak to them. I said I had already done so, and declined to do so again; and at last I managed to pacify her, after administering what I am afraid, from a stranger, was a rather sharp rebuke.

I am bound to say, she took it in good part Pussy had her good points. Who has not?

We ought to have reversed the order of things, and have visited Grindelwald first, and Mürren

afterwards. I own the former appeared to me tame. The walk to the Upper Glacier was very pleasant and easy, only a steep bit occurring sometimes ; and on these occasions, dear, kind Mrs. Fleming always insisted upon getting out of her chair and walking, because it was so heavy for the "poor men ;" so "the poor men" had a remarkably easy day's work, as far as *she* was concerned.

The foot of the glacier is very like a barren piece of sea-shore ; the ice itself is very grey and dirty looking. There is a grotto, which is glittering and clean, but it is so evidently artificially made that it loses its interest. On the whole, Grindelwald was a disappointment to us, I think. On our way home came a discussion of plans. We were anxious to get on to Thun and Berne, and thence to Geneva. Pussy announced her intention of spending the next day at Interlachen, to see the people and the shops, and to go to the band ; and Mrs. Fleming and Miss Lennox bowed to the decree. We decided upon continuing our journey as early as possible in the morning, and then getting on as fast as we could to Geneva and Chamouni.

CHAPTER IX.

THUN—BERNE : AN OLD SWISS CAPITAL—A LOST
BOX—AMONGST THE BEARS AND THE MISTS
—THE “COMFORT.”

SO, when the morning came, we said good-bye to Mrs. Fleming and Miss Lennox with very great regret ; and Pussy expressed a hope that we might meet again before long. I don't think any one of us echoed it, although for the aunt's sake we tried to be as kind as we could to her very odd little niece.

The weather had changed. It was a dull, grey day, and there was no glory of sunshine on mountains or woods, as we took the steamer from Därlingen (we first had ten minutes' train from Interlachen) to Thun.

It was all very still and lovely. We enjoyed a couple of hours' survey of the quaint old town, we walked up a steep hill to the church, and lingered in the churchyard for a while, gazing at

the magnificent view which it commands of the town and the river Aare, together with both sides of the valley and the distant mountains ; whilst we stood there the sun came out, lighting up the pure white snow and the green hills with his own bright light, I thought then, how near the sunshine and shadow of our lives are to each other—how when the dark dreary days are upon us, and our spirits sink within us, quite suddenly, quite unexpectedly, some ray of sunshine comes to us, and we know that it comes straight from the Hand of GOD.

I wonder whether snow mountains, and bright rivers, and green hills, and great rugged, lofty peaks make every one inclined to be allegorical ; that was their effect upon me, and, I think, upon the others. Life's journey with all its pains and pleasures seems to be so shadowed forth by all the marvellous beauty which our poor wondering eyes look upon with such mingled delight and awe.

Early in the afternoon we took the train to Berne. We ought to have seen the Alps as we approached the city, but we only saw a thick rolling mist ; not the faintest outline of a single mountain was visible.

Our arrival at Berne will always stand out in my memory with feelings of mingled alarm and shame—alarm, when I think of the great mis-

fortune with which I was threatened ; shame, when I remember how very badly I, the chaperone of the party, who ought to have been perfectly calm and self-possessed, bore that misfortune.

In the bustle of departure at Thun, we had allowed our luggage to go into the luggage van ; when we arrived at Berne, my box was not to be found.

I spoke to an official, who told me that "it certainly was not lost ; I should find it some time or another ; this kind of thing happened every day."

I took a gloomy view of the matter from the first. It seemed almost like a judgment upon me for having laughed at Mary's anxiety over her possessions, and at Mr. Peter Hopkins's despair over the loss of his geological specimens. I think, if I remember rightly, that I expressed my intention of waiting at the station until the precious little box (it really was a sweet thing in boxes) turned up ; but the others begged me to come on to the hotel, and I walked with them in the most dejected frame of mind. I could not summon up energy enough to order the meal, for which all the others were quite ready. Margaret did it for me, and when it appeared I most positively declined any food.

Say what you like, it is a serious matter to feel

that you are suddenly bereft of all your worldly possessions in a strange land. The four came to the front in a most generous manner. "If you don't get your box," said Margaret, "we have agreed that you must buy all you want out of the general fund. We can go home a few days earlier than we intended; and, after all, we have done a great deal."

I thanked them as well as I could, but my thanks were feeble.

"Is there anything you especially value in the box?" said Mary.

"Those boots," I answered.

"What boots?"

"The boots I had made to order, regular Alpine boots, that would climb anywhere. I can't get on without them."

No one knew that I had these boots, and they were all very sympathetic when they heard of them.

"I hope you may be able to do a great deal of climbing," said Cousin Rosa, cheerfully.

"Not in these boots," I answered disconsolately, showing a pair of very thin boots, already beginning to be a little the worse for wear.

Just at that moment the porter of the hotel came up to say that the box was at Olten (how it had

got there I don't know in the least), and it would be at Berne by nine o'clock that evening. It was then that a feeling of shame came to me. I apologized humbly for having been so disagreeable, and made a most excellent meal.

We went out afterwards, first to the Cathedral Terrace, to look at the view. "The great attraction



of Berne is the view it commands of the snow-clad Alps of the Bernese Oberland," read Cousin Rosa from her guide-book ; and then she proceeded to tell us what mountains were to be seen. "In clear weather," she continued, "they are visible from every open space."

Well, I suppose they are, but it was not clear weather, very misty weather indeed, and the snow mountains were utterly invisible—no power of imagination could conjure up even the ghost of one of them.

Kate insisted upon treating us all to ices—a kind of make up, I suppose, for not seeing the snow and ice in the distance ; and when we had partaken of them, and heard from the pretty girl in Swiss costume, who served us with them, that it might be two or three days before the mist rolled off the mountains, we made our way to the town.

We were quite charmed with it, it was so utterly foreign looking. The streets with arcades on each side of them, like Chester, and a stream running through them, and fountains at every turn, and over the fountains statues of a most grotesque kind. Bears, large and small, the prominent objects everywhere ; bears by dozens on the old clock tower ; bears in the shops ; live bears, which we went to see and to feed in the Bärengaben or bear's den, close to the handsome bridge which crosses the Aare. Oh, if only the snow mountains had been as visible as the bears ! Still, the latter were amusing in their way.

We came across a very comical, fat old man, surrounded by an admiring crowd, with a huge

nightcap on his head, and a table full of all kinds of wares in front of him.

"How nicely that little portmanteau would carry some of our collars and cuffs and lace things!"



said Mary. "You know we must make ourselves look a little respectable at Chamouni and Zermatt, and I don't see how we are to manage it, if we are to send on our luggage from Geneva, and not to see it again until I don't know when."

I did not know *when* either, and my recent experience in the luggage line had made me sympathetic towards my friend. Moreover, I was anxious to make a kind of *amende honorable* for my behaviour ; and, truth to tell (we are all more or less selfish, I suppose), it struck me that the little portmanteau would hold my own cap very nicely, as well as the little vanities of the rest of the party. I bargained with the hero of the nightcap, who asked three francs for the thing. I beat him down to two and a half ; I dare say he would have taken one and a half, had I gone on finding fault with the price, but I was not equal to this.

I carried off the portmanteau, which from that day was called the "comfort," and really bore out its name.

"Call us if there is a sunrise," was the last injunction I received when I bade my friends good-night, having first claimed their admiration for the boots, which I took out of my dear restored little box, to show them.

CHAPTER X.

LAUSANNE, OUCHY, GENEVA, CHAMOUNI: STILL
IN A MIST—A GLEAM OF SUNSHINE—THE
MONARCH OF THE ALPS—A STRANGE SUNDAY
—ON THE ICE—MONSIEUR ARMAND.

NO, there was no sunrise to be seen on the mountains when I looked out of my window between four and five o'clock the next morning; only a thick, dense mist, and not the very slightest prospect of the shadows rolling away.

I thought a good long rest would do all the others good, so I let them sleep on, until half-past seven, and decided that the best thing we could do would be to take the ten o'clock train to Lausanne. I spent the quiet time that morning in accounts and calculations, and at breakfast I began thus:

"I want a little talk over our money matters. Do you know that we have been away from home very nearly a fortnight, and we have not once

touched upon the subject? You have all been very trustful."

"Oh, we trust you entirely!" said Cousin Rosa; "you know that, I am sure."

"Yes, I do; but trust in me will not make the money last an indefinite time, and you know you all promised to be quite ready to return to England at the end of a week, if necessary."

I saw that they were all more or less agitated, and Cousin Rosa instinctively turned to the money-table in Murray.

"Well," I said, "I have an announcement to make; nerve yourselves for it."

"Do be quick, and don't tease," said Margaret, looking almost livid.

"Well, our expenses have not been anything like what I thought they would have been, and I certainly think we can manage quite another fortnight perhaps more."

"You darling!" said Kate, who was rather of the gushing order.

"You clever old woman!" said Mary.

"You've not done badly," said Margaret.

"I felt quite sure that our trust in you would not be misplaced," said Cousin Rosa.

So they were all pleased, and I was more than content.

‘Now,’ I went on, “we must have some fixed and definite purpose as to our proceedings. Say that we do the lake to-morrow, get to Geneva in the evening ; start the next morning for Chamouni, stay there three or four days ; then go on to Zermatt, and over the Furka, back to Lucerne, and have a week’s quiet in that charming *pension* the C——’s were at last year.”

They all agreed to everything ; never were such charming and accommodating fellow-travellers as those four. I need not have dreaded any clashing of strong wills. I never discovered that any one of them had a will of her own until the last day of those happy five weeks, and then they all rather reminded me—and I have no doubt that I reminded them—of children who have had a little too much pleasure during the holidays.

They all went out now to buy bears—silver bears, wooden bears, and gold bears of various sizes and in various attitudes ; and I stayed at the hotel to pay our bill, and to send most of the luggage (not my boots) on to Lucerne.

I was in my room, when there came a loud knock at the door.

“*Herein !*” I cried. No one entered. Another knock, another “*herein*,” and who should stand there as large—or, rather as small—as life, but Pussy.

"I knew we should astonish you," she said. "The truth is, we were very much cheated yesterday, and got a horrible dinner, so I said we had better rejoin you; and I made them all get up at five o'clock this morning, and here I am. The others are all coming on."

"We are just off," I answered hopelessly.

"We are coming with you to Geneva, and perhaps to Chamouni. Wussy and I met some gentlemen we know who are going there, and they say it is well worth seeing."

By this time Mrs. Fleming and Wussy and Miss Lennox had arrived, and the dear old lady whispered to me—

"I hope you are not very vexed. She *would* come."

I could most truthfully say that I was delighted to see *her* again, and there was no time for anything more, for the buyers of bears came back, and their astonishment may be better imagined than described. In another ten minutes we were in the train, *en route* for Lausanne.

It was our first experience of Pussy in a railway carriage, for anything longer than a ten minutes' journey. I hope we shall not be considered uncharitable for agreeing that we hoped it would be our last.

She was first too warm, then too cold ; she was in a draught, and then she wanted air. In fact, she changed seats with us all several times over, and got some polite young Germans to join in the little game.

We were glad when the three hours' journey was at an end, and we stood on the platform of the railway station at Lausanne. We had caught a glimpse of the Lake of Geneva on one side, and of the Pleiades, the Dent de Jaman, and the mountains of Savoy on the other ; but heavy mist hung all around, and we agreed that it would be better to push on straight to Geneva. It was of no use wasting either our time or our money by going to look at Vevey, Montreux, and Chillon in a fog.

We determined upon getting some luncheon at Ouchy, and taking the next steamer to Geneva—which we did ; and it was on that steamer that Pussy and Wussy met the same people they had met at Interlachen, who had persuaded them into going to Chamouni. *They* had changed their minds, and were going to make straight for Paris ; and Pussy and Wussy instantly changed theirs, and said they *must* spend a week in the French capital before they returned to England.

Poor Mrs. Fleming suggested that it might be

rather warm, and Pussy said she revelled in the heat. So it was settled that they were to begin their homeward journey the very next day, and they took the train for Paris, just at the same hour in the bright early morning as we started for Chamouni ; and I may as well remark here that we have none of us seen the sisters since, although we are all of us glad to number Mrs. Fleming and Miss Lennox amongst our friends, and to see as much of them as we can.

I must not anticipate, but go back to the steamer, where we sat trying to penetrate the mist, and talking to a nice bright set of English boys who had been three days at Vevey, and had seen nothing. "Worse than a London fog," they said it was. They were intensely amused at Cousin Rosa's persistent endeavours to find out where the mountains *ought* to have been visible.

As we got nearer to Geneva, it seemed to be clearing just a very little ; not enough to make us feel excited, but our spirits rose slightly as we looked in the direction in which Mont Blanc was to be seen, on a fine day.

"My father spent three weeks at Geneva and Chamouni last summer, and never as much as saw him," said one of the lads, cheerfully. "I believe he's a humbug."

A few minutes more, and one of the sailors came up to us, and said, "Le voilà." We looked, and looked, and saw nothing for a minute—nothing, at least, but what seemed a great white cloud, with the mist rolling away before it; and then the cloud itself seemed to break and disperse in strange, fantastic shadows, and there, distant but majestic, stood the Monarch himself, in all his dazzling whiteness.

We could only look at him, we could not speak. Even those bright, bonnie lads were silent for a few minutes; and I saw one of them take off his cap, whilst an expression of mingled awe and wonder came upon his young face.

"It was worth coming to Switzerland to see this," said Mary to me, "even if we had seen, and were to see nothing else."

I felt that she was right, and that somehow or another we ought to go home better than we came—more loving, more earnest, more reverent, because something of a fuller realization of GOD'S power had come to us.

We landed at Geneva as the sun was setting upon Mont Blanc. We took up our quarters at the comfortable Hôtel de Russie, and we went out for a stroll through the streets of the pretty town; and then we stood upon the quay and looked at the lake and the river, all dark in the evening light,

but glittering with bright rows of reflected lamps from bridges and hotels. We were in wild spirits, very like a parcel of school-girls out for a holiday. The sight of Mont Blanc had the effect of double-distilled "atmospheric champagne."

We went to bed early, and the morning rose clear and bright, and beautiful as the heart of the most sanguine traveller could desire.

We had secured our places in the *diligence*, or rather *char à banc*, which was, we thought, better than a private carriage, to take us to Chamouni. We thoroughly enjoyed the drive, and when we reached the village of St. Martin, at about one o'clock, quite suddenly, although we had been looking for it all the morning, Mont Blanc, in all its glory, stood before us.

Then came a hurried dinner at St. Gervais les Bains; a *table d'hôte* affair, to which all the occupants of the *char à banc* sat down, and every one talked, and ate, and seemed to be in a hurry to get on.

Well, we got on, or rather off, at last, and there was the Monarch of the Alps before us, the greater part of the way to Chamouni; and as we drew nearer to the village, the great glaciers became visible, and we grew impatient to get nearer, to what was then only a distant view.

Of all the bewildering places at which to arrive Chamouni is the most bewildering.

There we were at the top of the *char à banc*, and below us was a sea of faces gazing up at us, and a number of voices screaming—not in chorus, but one by one, as though they were singing the notes of a scale—the names of the different hotels. There must have been an amicable arrangement between the respective porters and “boots,” to give each of their establishments a fair chance.

When the last voice had reached the highest note of the scale, the first began. “*Impérial, Royal, Londres, Angleterre, Union, Palais de Cristal, Suisse, Conttet*,” were the words of the song. It was going on still after we had dismounted, and were on our way to the *Hôtel et Pension Conttet*, where we arranged to live *en pension* (eight francs a day) for three or four days.

We had barely time to get some of our “lace things,” and my cap, out of the “comfort,” when the dinner bell rang, and we sat down for the first time to *table d’hôte*, always excepting the hurried meal at St. Gervais.

The other four did not like it, they said the room was hot and stuffy, the meal long, and the people stupid. There were really not many there, except strangers, like ourselves. Most of the

travellers staying in the house were out on excursions, and were coming in to a later meal. The *pension* was a most comfortable one; Conttet, a retired guide, a most suggestive, civil landlord.

After dinner we went out and had a look at the village, and invested in alpenstocks, ready for the morning's start.

It was on a Saturday evening that we arrived at Chamouni, and it was a comfort, after all our wanderings, to kneel in the quiet of the early Sunday morning in the little English church, at Holy Communion.

We determined to devote that day to a visit to the Glacier des Bossons. We took a guide with us—a Swiss boy of eleven years old—such a bright-eyed little fellow, brimful of importance at having five ladies in his charge. His name was Armand; we called him Monsieur Armand, he was such a dear, fussy, important little man.

We walked on in the lovely summer morning, through woods and pastures, and past bridges and waterfalls; and as we neared the glacier, we were met by an old man who looked scornfully at Monsieur Armand, and said he was "no guide;" and Monsieur Armand, in his turn, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "Il est fou ce vieillard." However, the old man came on—I believe, at Cousin

Rosa's invitation ; and when we reached the ice, a sturdy young fellow met us, axe in hand, and declared that we should not cross the glacier but in his company.

There was quite a little scene. However, our old friend—who, I am afraid, had somewhat imposed upon us—was dismissed with a franc ; and Monsieur



Armand seemed to wish he had five pairs of hands to help us all, over what he said was most dangerous ground.

“Attendez, Madame! c'est qu'il est très dangereux par-là,” he was constantly saying.

It was very slippery. My boots were splendid,

and the others had all had nails driven into theirs, by the advice of the waiter at the hotel.

Our friend of the axe had to hew steps in the ice for us, and we got on grandly, and enjoyed it all thoroughly. We pursued our way to the Pierre Pointue, a steep ascent, some two hours' walk beyond the Glacier des Bossons. This is the first stage of the ascent to Mont Blanc.

It made me wild to attempt the other stages. I don't think the others were inclined to be as venturesome, so I said nothing about it, and only looked with longing eyes at the pure white Monarch himself, so near and yet so far away, and the whole Dôme du Goûter, with all its pointed *aiguilles* dazzlingly bright in the sunshine.

We were very tired when we reached the hotel at Chamouni at six o'clock. It had been such a strange Sunday—a Sunday to be remembered all our lives. The quiet service in the little church, and then all those wonders and glories of snow and ice. It seemed as though our hearts broke out into one glad, fervent Benedicite: "O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord ; praise Him, and magnify Him for ever."

CHAPTER XI.

THE MONTANVERT—THE BRÉVENT: MORE MOUNTAINS—MORE ICE—A DIGNITARY OF THE CHURCH LAID LOW.

MONDAY morning, and at seven o'clock we were at breakfast; and at half-past seven on our way to the Montanvert, escorted, of course, by Monsieur Armand, who, I believe, had been lounging about the premises some two hours beforehand, afraid that we might secure another guide if he did not appear on the scene in good time.

The ascent to the Montanvert is easy enough, and the snow about and around us, lit up by the dazzling August sunshine, made us feel very bright and exhilarated. The actual feeling that it gives is not easy to put into words, so I will say no more about it.

We fell in with a South American gentleman and his two little boys, who were going to ascend

Mont Blanc the next day. Those young southerners were splendid little fellows. The younger, who was only six years old, was, his father told us, much bolder and braver than his ten years old brother.

A two hours' walk found us at the top of the Montanvert, quite ready for a substantial breakfast.

There was a splendid view of the Mont Blanc chain, all the *aiguilles* of which the guide-books give the names ; and after we had feasted our eyes for a while, we started for the Mer de Glace. As a glacier, it is not to my mind half as beautiful as the Glacier des Bossons, but it is very marvellous, and the "great frozen sea" tells its own story of the Creator's power.

We had the Glacier des Bossons to ourselves. We crossed the Mer de Glace in a crowd—English, French, Germans, and last, though not least, Americans. The American element was very prominent indeed. The gentlemen of the party (the ladies too, of course) had ridden up the Montanvert in shoals, and had commented upon our "pluck" in walking up anything so steep ; and now there they all were, tumbling about on the ice, with no nails in their boots—at least, the majority of them had neglected this precaution ; and they

laughed and talked and screamed, and took their misfortunes in the most cheery way.

There was a real live bishop amongst them, who seemed to be a kind of centre of attraction. "Hold hard, bishop!" "Take care, bishop!" "I guess that was a spill, bishop!" resounded on all



sides ; and certainly his reverence did slide about in the most remarkable manner, falling headlong on the ice, and then picking himself up, only to fall again, and taking the numerous "spills" and the laughter of his friends with the most perfect equanimity.

Monsieur Armand was delightfully amusing during that crossing of the Mer de Glace.

He at first entreated us to wait until he could conduct each of us in turn across the dangerous places ; but Margaret, Mary, and myself at last succeeded in convincing him that we were as sure-footed as donkeys, and he then turned all his attention to Kate and Cousin Rosa, possessing himself of the latter's guide-books, and taking her under his protection in a kind of paternal fashion, which was comical in the extreme.

We made our way to the Chapeau across the Mauvais Pas, which, although steep and rugged enough, is not quite as bad as its name would lead one to believe. It really looks more awful than it is. It is half a staircase, and half a ledge about a foot wide, rounding a perpendicular rock, which overlooks the glacier ; but if you are moderately sure footed you are all right, for you can catch hold of an iron staple which is within reach of your hand, and there is really no danger, unless you happen to suffer from more than usual giddiness.

As we were coming down from the Chapeau it began to rain fast, and we were very glad, when we reached the high-road, to find a tumble-down looking carriage, in which we drove back to Chamouni.

The rain lasted the whole evening. We put on

our waterproofs after dinner, and strolled into the village, and talked to the numerous guides as to the weather prospects of the morrow.

"Il fera beau demain," was the universal verdict, and by this time we had learnt to place unbounded faith in Swiss prophecies on this subject ; so we went back to the *pension*, and took a last look out of our bedroom windows upon dense clouds and pattering rain, and in spite of it all we gave way to no gloomy forebodings, but laid our tired heads upon our pillows, with the certainty that all would be right when we awoke in the morning.

Our faith was rewarded. At seven o'clock the sun was shining brilliantly, and there was faithful little Monsieur Armand waiting for us at the door of the *salle à manger*, to know what mountain we were going to climb. We decided upon the Brévent, for thence Mont Blanc, in all its unrivalled grandeur, is to be seen.

I do not think I need say any more about the mountain ascent. Kate and Cousin Rosa had mules ; the rest of us walked.

In four hours we stood on the summit of the mountain, gazing at the grand panorama around us.

It was almost our last look at Mont Blanc in its glory. Very unwillingly we came to the conclusion that we must leave Chamouni the next

day. There were letters waiting for us at Zermatt, which we were anxious to get, and so we made up our minds to bid adieu to the great Alpine King, and to go on another stage in our journey.

We had had visions of the delights of doing what is called the Tour de Mont Blanc, and reaching Zermatt by way of Courmayeur, Aosta, and the Theodule Pass, but an English gentleman, versed in Swiss weather lore, advised us to forego it, and predicted that before long the weather must change, and the passes be rendered impassable.

"Perhaps we shall be able to do it next year," we said mournfully to each other; and Cousin Rosa murmured, as usual—

"We cannot do everything, can we?"

Half-way down from the Brévent, at a chalet where there was a powerful telescope, we espied our little friends, and their father and guides, just leaving the Grands Mulets.

I have made the cheeks of many a mother at home turn white with terror, when I have told her what those little South American boys went through in their ascent of Mont Blanc.

I heard afterwards from one of the guides that their father was very tired, but that the brave little fellows themselves were as bright and fresh as possible.

CHAPTER XII.

CHATELARD—OVER THE TÊTE NOIRE—MARTIGNY—VISP: A SUBSTANTIAL MEAL—A SAD STORY—A CHEAP HOTEL.

THE next morning, at seven o'clock, we started for Martigny. The sun was shining brightly. Monsieur Armand, with tears in his brown eyes, was telling us all we might have done if we had only stayed one day longer. A stray letter, giving us all the home news we wanted, had arrived the evening before. Should we counter-order the carriage, and do the Flégère, and put off our departure for another twenty-four hours? They all wished it so much. I felt more tyrannical than I had felt all through our wanderings when I said—

“I think it will be best to keep to our original decision.”

They were all very good, and took it quite calmly. I could not have given any really valid reason for my assumption of authority. Surely it

was another Will than mine, which bade us continue our journey on that day.

After a lovely drive, in sight of snow mountains and glaciers, we reached the little inn at Chatelard, within ten minutes' distance of the Tête Noire, at one o'clock.

We were ravenously hungry, and were told we must stay there two hours, to rest the horses. A nice old French lady, who with her son and daughter had had breakfast with us on the Montanvert, came forward and greeted us, as though we had been friends for years. She shrugged her shoulders as only French people *can* shrug their shoulders, and informed us that the food was "*affreux*"—not *beef*, but horse, she was convinced ; moreover, the bread was sour, and the coffee looked and tasted like ink.

What a prospect for five hungry people !

"If only the bread and the coffee were good!" we exclaimed in chorus.

But they were not, our voluble friend said, and her son and daughter endorsed her sentiments. Meanwhile, Cousin Rosa had betaken herself to the study of the visitors' book, which was as great a weakness of hers as Baedeker and Murray.

"Oh dear!" she sighed ; "it is too dreadful!"

"What?" we asked.

"Why, this account of the food. Do come and read what the people say about it."

We read the sentiments of tourists of all nations, and they were not flattering to the genius of mine host. Whether he was unable to read writing I don't know ; I think his education must have been neglected. No amount of defiance of the world's opinion, could have allowed him to keep that visitors' book on his table with those warnings, couched in language more strong than elegant, against the viands he provided.

"It all alludes to beef and mutton," I said ; "but chickens are sure to be good ; anyhow, let us try one."

My inquiries were answered satisfactorily. A good-sized *poulet* was ready now—should be served immediately : the cost was to be six francs.

There is a great deal in the pleasure of anticipation. We sat down at the little narrow table, with our eyes fixed longingly upon the kitchen door. We had ordered some coffee immediately on our arrival, and "the four" made wry faces over it, and said they could not drink it. I took some milk, which was extremely good. I advised them all to try it, but they cheerfully said they would wait for the *poulet*.

We *did* wait, nearly half an hour ; then the door

was thrown open very wide, and we saw a large dish, and on the dish—well, I suppose it was a *poulet*,—but it was not nearly as large as a good-sized pigeon.

“Le poulet, mesdames,” said the landlord.

“Ce n’est pas *là* le poulet !” I exclaimed indignantly.



“Mais oui, madame !” was the equally indignant reply.

The situation was too ludicrous. Hungry though we were, we all laughed, and the landlord looked offended ; whilst our French friend, who had come to see how we were getting on, took up the cudgels for us, and spoke her mind.

It was all in vain. No amount of talking would

increase the dimensions of that poor little bird, which, I feel convinced, one short half-hour before had been running about in the yard of the inn where we afterwards saw several of his little brethren.

Margaret, who is a capital carver, undertook the manipulation of the *poulet*. "We may as well eat what there is," she said philosophically; and she helped us all round in a way that did her credit.

It would have been a puzzle to any of us to say *what* there was of the poor little bird. Nothing, I think, would have been the true answer to the question.

"We must have bread and milk," I said; "never mind the bread being a little sour."

So we ordered some boiled milk, and really made a remarkably good meal, and enjoyed it too.

We did not chronicle our experience of the inn at Chatelard in the visitors' book, but went on our way as happily as though we had fed sumptuously; only there were black clouds rolling above us, and we felt that the predicted rain was not far off.

We crossed the Tête Noire, and looked down from the dizzy height into the gorge below—a most glorious combination of heights and depths, rocks, torrents, cascades, and pine trees, all mingled together in wild confusion.

Lovely though it all was, I think we were thankful when we were safely over it, for there was a wayside cross which told how, only one short year before, a fearful accident had happened there to some of our own country people, whom we knew very well by name. We little thought then how very near we were to a like danger.

A few minutes more, and we were turned out of the carriage, and requested to walk up the hill to the Col de la Forclaz. It was an hour's walk, and the rain began to come down fast. We just saw the valley of the Rhone and Martigny lying at our feet when we reached the summit, and then we saw very little more until we arrived at Martigny, which looked dull and dark and sombre enough as we entered it in that pelting, driving rain.

We had made up our minds to have some dinner (the *poulet* had not been satisfying), and to get to bed in good time, so as to be ready to make an early start for Zermatt.

And here I will tell what I meant just now, when I said how near we were to danger as we crossed the Tête Noire.

All that night it rained as I have seldom heard it rain, all the next day it never ceased, and on that day, just twenty-four hours after we had driven across the deep wild gorge, a carriage, con-

taining a Dutch lady and gentleman and their daughter, crossed it also, probably talking, as we had been talking, of all they had seen and were yet to see—trying, it may have been, through the driving rain, to catch a glimpse of the loveliness of which they had heard so much.

In an instant the bridge gave way, and the carriage was precipitated into the waters of the raging, brawling Trient. So death came to them. God in His mercy grant that greater beauty than that which had been hidden from them, dawned upon them on that August day when He called them to Himself!

We only heard this sad story four or five days afterwards, and then we all remembered, with feelings of mingled awe and thankfulness, how we had hastened our departure from Chamouni, and so had been prevented crossing the Tête Noire on that pouring day.

I could not, if I tried, describe what we felt about it, so I will say nothing.

At Martigny we were told that no beds were to be had, so there was no help for it but to order some dinner at once, and to telegraph to Visp for rooms.

Not a single glimpse had we yet had of the

Rhone Valley, except that somewhat hazy one from the Col de la Forclaz. We drove to the station in the hotel omnibus, and took our places in the train, and slept peacefully during the hour's journey to Visp. Had it been broad daylight, we should have seen nothing through the driving, pelting rain.

On the platform of the station stood a very tall, masculine-looking woman and a very small man, who inquired whether we had telegraphed from Martigny for rooms.

I said "Yes," and asked whether they came from the Hôtel de la Poste.

"No," was the answer. "There was not a bed to be had there, but we were to come with them. The Poste had passed us on to them, and we might expect to find everything we wanted—comfort, economy, cleanliness, such as it was impossible to find elsewhere."

It was raining faster than ever, and the big woman and the little man shouldered our belongings, alpenstocks and all, and took us off to the Hôtel des Alpes.

Well, it was a little bit rough, but very clean and comfortable, and we slept well. For breakfast the next morning we had delicious coffee and rolls,

and raspberries unlimited, and our bill was fifteen francs, including most obsequious attendance from our custodians.

If ever I revisit Visp, I shall certainly put up at the Hôtel des Alpes.

CHAPTER XIII.

ZERMATT—THE RIFFEL : IN THE RAIN—THE
GLORY OF IT—SNOW AND SUNSHINE.

OH, the dreariness of that morning! The rain coming down more determinedly than ever, and at the door of the hotel five very miserable-looking horses and five half-drenched men, waiting to convey us to St. Nicholas, whence we were to take carriages to Zermatt.

What was to be done?

Visp was not a cheerful locality; moreover, Cousin Rosa said that the guide-books warned travellers against staying there, because of the malaria, produced by the mists rising from the valley.

"Suppose we all get low fever," she said, "it would be awkward."

"Very awkward indeed," I answered, with a heavy sigh.

It was enough to make any one sigh. There

were the horrors of malaria on the one hand, whilst on the other those five steeds represented seventy francs, to be paid for the honour of three hours' ride in the drenching rain.

The tall woman, and the little man, and the five guides, and we five all looked up at the sky, and all talked at once. The twelve voices were eloquent in French, German, and English. It was



wonderfully bewildering ; so much so, that to write a graphic account of how it was settled would be perfectly impossible. All I do know is that, as the church clock struck eight, we were all on our horses, a most disconsolate troop ; umbrellas over our heads, and rolling mist before us. Not a single

thing did we see all the way up the valley to St. Nicholas.

We met hosts of returning tourists from Zermatt, who looked at us pityingly, and said it had been so glorious there until the day before, but now they were glad to get away ; and in spite of it all, our guides persisted that it was going to be fine, and we tried to believe them.

The people at St. Nicholas said the same thing ; and after we had had some luncheon, we packed into two very small carriages, Kate and Cousin Rosa in one, Margaret, Mary, and myself in the other. Our carriage was driven by a very funny little man, who must have been a near relative of our friend Boots at Visp.

He owned a very funny little dog, named Tiger and the comfort of the little dog seemed to be the little man's one object in life.

I sat on the box, and the creature was placed at my feet so that he might get warm (he made me very cold), and my shawl was wrapped round the poor little shivering thing, and I could not find it in my heart to object. I liked the queer little man, for his care of his very ugly pet dog.

On we went through rain and mist, trying to be as cheerful as possible. We were at the door of the Hôtel Mont Cervin before we knew that we

had reached Zermatt, and as we alighted, wet, cold, and wretched, we were very politely received by the landlord. He, too, said it was going to be fine ; pledged his word to me, in fact, that the next morning would see the sun on the snow mountains.

"The Matterhorn ought to be there, and Monte Rosa there," said Cousin Rosa, standing hopelessly in the doorway, and studying Baedeker by the light of a lamp. We begged her to come and take off her wet things, and we went to our rooms, and unpacked our soaking belongings.

The "comfort" was reduced to a state that was something like pulp, but its contents had not suffered ; and after our very pleasant chamber-maid had taken it downstairs to be dried, it was brought back, looking rocky and ridgy, rather like a dirty glacier on a small scale. It stood us in good stead, however, to the end of our travels. We all conceived a strong attachment for it, and there is, I hope, a possibility that, although it has lost its pristine beauty, it may some day revisit its native land.

After we had refreshed ourselves a little, we went down to the *salle à manger*, where about a hundred and fifty people were half through dinner.

We took up our position at a side table, had some delicious hot coffee, and some meat, which I

think was goat, but I am not sure about it ; we were very hungry, however, and ate it, whatever it was.

We went into the *salon* for a short time and there met "our boys," the same we had encountered on the steamer on the Lake of Geneva.

They gave a most dreary account of the day and a half they had spent at Zermatt, and positively declined to believe that the sun would shine on the morrow.

"These foreigners are a parcel of humbugs, and their weather is as humbugging as themselves," was the unanimous conclusion at which they had arrived.

Certainly our last look out of the hall door seemed to favour "our boys'" opinion, but the sequel proved that they were in the wrong and the foreigners in the right.

Gloriously beautiful was the morning that succeeded that drenching, dispiriting day. We could hardly believe that it really was going to be fine—in fact, that it was very fine indeed, and that we must be up and doing at once.

I think we were all a little tired, and almost inclined for another hour or so in bed ; but the weakness was but momentary, and very soon we were looking out upon the green slopes of the lovely

valley of Zermatt, and at the Matterhorn rising majestic in the sunlight. Not a cloud to be seen anywhere, only the bright blue sky shining upon the snow on its summit, and lighting up the black broken walls, which seem to spring out of a sea of ice, all combining to make this grand, grim, awful-looking mountain, standing there in its solitary state, the most wonderful, if not the most beautiful, of all the giants of the Alps.

Our breakfast that morning was an affair of a very few minutes. We had begun to distrust Swiss weather, and to fear that the brilliant sunshine of to-day, might soon give place to the rain and mist of yesterday. I had telegraphed to the hotel on the Riffel, to secure beds for the night. Two mules were at the door, and we began our ascent.

The heat was intense, but what did it matter, with that marvellous Matterhorn on one side of us and Monte Rosa on the other, and between them a crowd of snow-peaked mountain-tops and trackless paths of ice ?

On went the horses, on went we, who would not ride because we wanted the honour and glory of climbing the steep ascent ; and in two hours we stood on the Riffelberg, and looked upon the Monte Rosa chain, and upon the great G6rner Glacier, and upon the valley of Zermatt lying at our feet, whilst

conspicuous above all else the Matterhorn reared its lofty head, grim and stately in the morning light.

We had seen nothing like it before, and we knew that more glories of snow and ice were yet to be revealed to us.

We had a meal at the hotel (goat again, I think), and then we started for the Görner Grat.



THE MATTERHORN.

The walk was rather a tiring one. We were always seeming near the summit, and always finding that we had not yet reached the height. We stood on it at last, and there we were face to face with the grandest mountains in Europe, and awe and wonder were in all our hearts, as, in the sweet, bright summer sunshine, we gazed upon the dazzling snow and upon the great rivers of ice,

which seemed to shut us out from the outer world, and take us, if I may so speak in all reverence, a little nearer to GOD.

I cannot describe it. You must see it to know what it is, and the effect it all has upon you—taking you, as it were, a great step on the upward way, and then leaving you to descend from those great heights, more thoroughly braced to do your duty and to climb the rugged paths of life, until the greatest height of all is reached, from which there is no descent.

We waited as long as we could, in that glorious spot, and came down to the hotel to see the mountains bathed in their sunset glory. But I cannot say any more about sunsets or sunrises ; there is but one set of words in which to speak about them, and yet they were not two of them alike, and all the richest stores of language would fail to describe what I would convey to you if I could.

We walked down to Zermatt the next morning. I was *hors de combat* for the first time since our departure from England ; and, ignominious though it is to confess the fact, I had to lie down on my bed. A raging headache proved stronger even than the attractions of Zermatt.

I persuaded the others to go out. I don't quite know where they went, but they came back towards

evening, their hands filled with edelweiss, which they had found growing in quantities, but *not* near the snow.

We walked into the churchyard, and looked upon the graves of those who had met with their death climbing the snowy Alps. English travellers and Swiss guides lay there, side by side ; GOD be praised, we believe in the Communion of Saints.

CHAPTER XIV.

VISP—BRIEG—VIESCH—THE FURKA—ANDERMATT
—THE ' ST. GOTHARD—THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE
—FLUELEN—LUCERNE: A GREAT GLACIER
—TAKEN INTO THE "CAT HOUSE."

It was hard to turn our backs upon Zermatt the next day, to feel the Cima di Jazzi and the sight of Italy must be left to "another time."

We were told that the fine weather would not last; another day most probably, and it would be over.

I wanted to walk the whole way to Visp, but the idea was most positively negated by the others, who, I believe, thought that my unusual headâche meant that I might be sickening for fever; so I yielded to the outcry, engaged a carriage to take us to St. Nicholas, and thence we arranged to walk to Visp, stopping at Stalden for luncheon.

So in the sunlight we looked upon all the beauties which had been hidden from us by the

rain three days before ; and we came to the conclusion that, in spite of one or two wettings, the weather had so far treated us very well.

Very lovely was that walk, with the vine-clad hills and the great forest trees on either side of us, the rushing stream at our feet, and the grand



snow mountains behind us, lit up with the glory of the noonday sun.

A charming porter carried our luggage, and talked German glibly to me the whole way, and showed us short cuts, and admired our climbing and pedestrian powers.

We were weary and footsore when we reached Visp, and found our friends at the Hôtel des Alpes delighted to see us. We had some tea, with raspberries and mulberries, all of which were very refreshing.

On inquiry, I found that there was a return carriage to Andermatt to be had, and, after a long discussion with the coachman, I succeeded in making an agreement with him to take us thither for sixty francs ; he, in his turn, stipulating that we must sleep at Brieg that night.

There was just a little murmur of discontent when I announced that we must be off again in half an hour ; but I reminded Cousin Rosa that Baedeker or Murray (I forget which, perhaps both) said that Visp was unhealthy, so one of the party at least was satisfied.

Two hours' drive brought us to Brieg, of which I cannot say much, as it was ten o'clock at night when we arrived, and we started at five the next morning. Kate and Cousin Rosa were not favourably impressed with the night spent there. If the latter mentions it in her journal, to which I believe she devoted some hours, it will, I fancy, be in connection with natural history—certain tribes of insects.

We breakfasted at Viesch, two hours' drive from Brieg.

Viesch is a charming little primitive town, lying in a hollow, and is the usual point of departure for the Eggischhorn.

"Another time we will do that," I said, looking up at the cloudy, overcast sky, through which we could just see the outline of the mountain.

And the chorus of four plaintively echoed—

"Another time."

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when we reached the hotel at the foot of the Rhone Glacier. Here we dined and changed carriages, for some reason best known to our coachman and the monsieur he introduced to me as his *camarade*, who was to take us on to Andermatt.

We drove up a steep hill in sight of the Great Glacier—quite near it, in fact, and we reached the summit of the Furka, to feel the great rain-drops pattering down upon our heads, and to confess that the "foreign humbugs," as "our boys" called them, were generally right in their prophecies.

The Galenstock, the Maienwand, the Grimsel, and the Finster-Aarhorn looked grand but sombre amid the clouds, into which they seemed to be fast disappearing, and the remainder of our drive to Andermatt can be described in very few words.

It pelted, and we could see nothing. For the

first time since we left home, Cousin Rosa parted with her guide-books, and really had quite a long and refreshing sleep.

Arrived at Andermatt we had tea and trout; went to bed, to hear the rain beating against our windows, and the wind howling and sighing amid the mountains. Our dreams were of a dismal journey the next morning. But once more we awoke to see the sun shining brightly into our rooms, and our spirits rose, and the drive to Fluelen was very enjoyable.

From Andermatt to Geschenen the scenery is magnificent beyond description. The Devil's Bridge is a gorge from which huge granite rocks rise in gloomy grandeur, whilst the fierce torrent of the Reuss leaps and foams in a succession of cataracts with a loud and deafening roar. The great St. Gothard tunnel, albeit a marvel of engineering, bids fair to spoil the loveliness of the road, and to make one long for the old days, when travelling was not like everything else in this nineteenth century—made easy.

On to Amsteg, and there is the snowy Titlis above us, and we rather long to alight, and to go over the Sarnen Pass to Engelberg; but we know now that we cannot do everything, so on we drive through Altdorf to Fluelen.

We like to think of William Tell as we pass through the quaint old town, which everywhere speaks of the hero, whom we are now told we must regard as a myth.

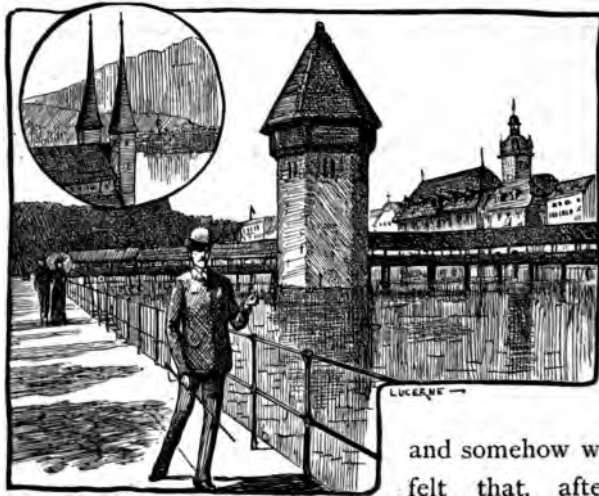
Well, after all, it is a pretty romance, and half our life here is made up of imaginations. Arrived at Fluelen, we had our first experience of foreign imposition.

The *camarade* demanded ten francs more than we had bargained for. I forgot to say we had agreed, at the Rhone Glacier, to take him on to Fluelen. He was abusive, and I was determined ; but I had to give in at last, thankful that he had not demanded more than ten francs in excess of the sum we had agreed upon, and relieved at finding ourselves safely on board the steamer bound for Lucerne. After all, we had got on wonderfully well. Fifteen pounds each—five pounds a week—had covered all our expenses hitherto. I still had fifty pounds in the common purse ; no occasion to turn homewards just yet.

We had written to Lucerne for rooms at the *pension*, which had been so highly recommended to us by more than one set of friends, and with the situation of which we had been much charmed on that Sunday we had spent at the Hôtel National. We had had no answer, and we were getting a little

anxious, for we heard on all sides that Lucerne was overcrowded ; there was not a single room to be had in any of the hotels.

The lake was very lovely, and the old bridges quaint, but we missed the glories of the snow ;



and somehow we
felt that, after

the few days' comparative rest, the fifty pounds would have considerably diminished, and it was somewhat hard to realize what it would be to go back to every-day life, after all the deep, intense enjoyment of those holiday days of ours.

"It is no use dragging up that hill to the *pension* unless we can be taken in," I said, as we reached the landing-stage at Lucerne. "I will go up

the steps at the back of the Cathedral, and see whether we can be accommodated ; and you had all better stay and collect the luggage, and go to the post, and meet me at the foot of the steps."

So it was agreed, and I mounted the steps, and walked up a hill which seemed to me steeper than any mountain I had climbed, the air was so hot and oppressive ; and I arrived at the door of a charming-looking house, and was met by a very nice, good-natured Swiss lady, to whom I told my name.

" Ah, then," she said in sorrowful tones, " you have not had my letter."

My heart sank ; I felt what was coming.

" We have no room at all. I am so sorry."

And she looked it too. I felt I was a weary, jaded, dusty-looking traveller, and I improved the occasion.

" Is it quite impossible ? " I said. " We would put up with anything."

" Do you mind being out of the house, five minutes' off ? "

" No ; we mind nothing," I answered, " so long as we have not to spend the night in the streets of Lucerne."

" Well, I will show you some rooms, if you will come with me."

"Poor thing! she is going to the 'Cat House,'" I heard a bright young English girl, who was standing at the door of the *pension*, announce to her companion, evidently a little sister.

The child laughed, and I wondered what it meant, but followed my guide a little further up the hill, and went in with her to a very nice-looking house, where just then there was not a sign of a cat.

Yes, we could get rooms there. Some people had just gone out, and they would be ready in an hour.

I ran down the steps as fast as I could, to tell the others of my success. I found them sitting very disconsolately in a carriage at the bottom of the hill. They had been told there was no room in the *pension*, and not a single vacant place of any description in the town. They were much relieved at the news I brought them. We drove up the hill, and found that my friend had got some tea ready for us, which was most refreshing, and then we proceeded to the "Cat House."

It was only the next morning that we discovered why it was so called. Six cats were always to be seen in the hall, lapping milk out of six saucers, in the most contented fashion.

Our quarters were very comfortable, the only

disadvantage being the distance from the *pension*. In fine weather it was well enough, but the tramp in the dark, or on rainy nights, was not particularly agreeable. We bore it, however, with surprising equanimity. How we should have grumbled under similar circumstances at home !

CHAPTER XV.

LUCERNE — BASEL — STRASBURG — BRUSSELS —
GHENT: WET DAYS AND FINE DAYS — HOME
AGAIN.



IX wet days and six fine days, that is how our time at Lucerne may be divided. That first evening was fine, but, even at the top of the hill, intensely close. What it must have been in the town I cannot imagine.

We unpacked our belongings, and tried to settle ourselves down comfortably for at least a week. We had made up our minds to stay in the "Cat House" certainly for that length of time.

At seven o'clock we went down to the *pension* to supper. We were told that there was no room

for us at any of the tables in the *salle à manger*. Should we object to going out into the verandah?

There were already a hundred people in the room—English, French, Germans, and Americans—and they all seemed to be talking in a bewildering kind of fashion; and we were only too delighted to get out into the cool evening air and have our meal, overlooking the lovely lake, which just at that moment was bathed in a flood of sunset glory.

There were two small round tables set in the verandah. Kate and Cousin Rosa were placed at one of them; Margaret, Mary, and myself at the other. At their table were some Germans, who could not speak a word of English; at ours were four English girls, who looked askance at us, and tried hard to be polite. They had had their fun to themselves for some days, and naturally could not help thinking us intruders. Before the meal was over, our acquaintance had progressed very satisfactorily; of course, some one knew some one whom some one else knew. By the next morning we were all the best friends possible, and several excursions were arranged between us, and carried out whenever the weather permitted of a day's expedition.

Our very amiable and obliging hostess always

took care that we should be provided with hard-boiled eggs and sandwiches on these occasions, and at any hour at which we returned in the evening there was a comfortable meal prepared for us.

I mention this fact because I believe that there is a prejudice against *pensions* for excursionists, because it is supposed that unless they are in at certain hours they forfeit their meals. It may be so in some cases, but Madame P——'s was an exception to the rule. Greater liberality, kindness, and thoughtfulness than we experienced under her roof, it would be quite impossible to find.

We visited Alpnacht, Brunnen, Axenstein, and Engelberg; and we had a most enjoyable day at Arth, where the fat old landlady of the Hôtel de l'Aigle greeted us as old friends, because we knew some people who were staying there, but who, unfortunately, were out for the day.

She presented me with a most lovely bouquet, and so won our hearts, that we made arrangements to go and spend two or three days at the sweet little village; only *that*, like several other things, never came off because of the rain.

In spite of the not too favourable weather, I must own that the rest during that time at Lucerne, to me, was very great.

No more accounts to be added up, no more

dinners to order, no more dread of *poulets* totally inadequate to satisfy the cravings of hunger.

Five francs a day each, fed us sumptuously—breakfast, dinner, and supper; and there was always the sweet lake to look upon, and there were sunsets to be seen from the *Drei Linden*, just five minutes' distance from the "Cat House."

The walk from the town to our quarters was a



somewhat steep one, and by the roadside the Stations of the Cross led up to an old Carmelite convent; and it was one of our great pleasures to find ourselves at noon outside the building and watching the good monks feed the poor hungry creatures who flocked round the doorway.

We got upon quite friendly terms with one of the good men. A small offering for his convent called forth excessive gratitude, and he seemed quite grieved that the rules of the order would not permit of his asking us inside the house. We often went into the chapel. It was very quiet and peaceful, and somehow there was a homelike feeling about it, partly, perhaps, because of the many works of mercy which we knew were performed by the good brothers who served at that simple, unpretending Altar.

Even the wet days at Lucerne had their advantages. "It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good," and I fancy our friends at home received longer letters than they would have done had the sun shone upon us perpetually.

There was a baby to worship—the handsomest specimen of an English baby it was possible to see.

His young mother had declined to leave home without her darling, and his father, having determined upon visiting Switzerland, consented to allow the thirteen-months-old baby to begin his travels, in spite of his tender years. Master Stanley, that was his baptismal name, seemed highly to appreciate the society at the *pension*, and was one of the great amusements of a wet morning.

He was an inmate of the "Cat House," and was

on terms of the closest intimacy with us, insisting upon his nurse bringing him to our rooms at all imaginable hours.

Then there was a very delightful old General, with a very charming wife, who contributed very much to the pleasure of our stay at the *pension*.

To the General and myself belongs the credit of instituting afternoon tea in the establishment, by way of passing away the time on some of those pouring days. We each invited a certain number of guests, and sat down round the dining-room table, a goodly company of about five and twenty.

We looked like a party of schoolboys and girls going in for thorough enjoyment. Large cups, great plates of rolls, and cakes of endless variety. Going out to buy these cakes, armed with water-proofs and umbrellas, was one of our amusements on a wet morning.

There were a considerable number of Americans in the *pension*. Some we liked very much ; some we never as much as spoke to. Two ladies, Americans, who were travelling together, showed us extreme kindness, allowing us the use of their rooms, and so preventing our trudging backwards and forwards to the "Cat House," to make our evening toilet.

In addition to their extreme amiability, they were

both most pleasant and intellectual companions, and we are looking forward with great pleasure to seeing them in England at no very distant day.

One American lady confided to me, that she had done everything in Europe that she had wished to do, except two things. One was, "she had failed to catch sight of the Queen, and thought she must revisit England on purpose to see her Majesty," for which loyal sentiment I honoured her. The other was that she had not been able to see a regular London fog, and she understood it was a sight well worth seeing. I could not agree with her in this idea ; but she was really quite interested in hearing which would be the most likely month to gratify her little desire, and if she can but combine royalty and a dense fog, I am sure she will consider that she has *done* England thoroughly.

The evenings at the *pension* were the great joke.

There were some children and young people amongst our numbers, and the General suggested that, for their amusement, games should be instituted in the *salle à manger* ; so a number of us, glad to escape the stiffness of the drawing-room, went downstairs, and all turned into children.

Musical chairs and post were the most popular games, entered into with a zest which was truly astonishing, considering that the eldest of the

young people who indulged in the little pastimes must have been quite seventy-five years old.

Margaret, who was the most dignified of us all, entirely refused to join in the games the first evening they were suggested.

She did not come downstairs until just before the merriment ceased, and she then confided to me that, "had she not known where she was, she should have fancied herself gazing upon an entertainment for the amusement of the patients at Colney Hatch."

Judge of my amazement when I saw her the next evening in the very thick of the fun, struggling bravely with the General for the possession of a chair. She had actually caught the infection of the general mirth, and joined in the games as heartily as any one.

Certainly, foreign travel causes us to be guilty of freaks we would not perpetrate at home, and this is, to my mind, another of its great advantages.

Well, the last fine day came, and the last wet day, or rather the last wet day and the two last fine days.

Saturday was very wet indeed, worse a great deal than it had been at all, for it poured unceasingly the whole day long.

I started by the steamer at eight in the morning

for Brunnen, to visit some old friends who were staying there. I took a book with me, and went into the deck cabin, and when I looked out (I was obliged to look out occasionally ; I should have felt an utter Goth had I been too engrossed in my novel), the same sight met my eye—waterfalls—there seemed to be nothing but waterfalls, coming from hills and rocks, and dashing down into the lake.

The Americans—I suppose, out of respect for Niagara—think no scenery is to be compared to a waterfall. I should advise them to travel on one of the Swiss lakes after three days' constant down-pour and in driving rain. They cannot fail to be gratified, if they do this.

Coming back, it was just the same ; and I really felt it was quite time to be going home, if this kind of weather was to last.

We talked it over in the evening, and we settled that we must be starting on Monday. Cousin Rosa was the only one who was tolerably submissive. The others were loud in their lamentations, and predicted that the weather the following week would be lovely.

"But sunshine will not bring us gold," I wisely remarked.

They looked confused, and humbly confessed they had all been living in a fool's paradise as

regarded money. I had been so kind, and saved them all trouble. It was really quite touching.

"We ought to give you a testimonial, expressive of our gratitude," said Cousin Rosa. "I felt quite sure our trust in you would not be misplaced."

This was something to be proud of. I thanked Cousin Rosa as best I could, but I am a bad hand at speechifying. Perhaps, if she reads these pages, she will better understand my gratitude.

By some horrible irony of fate, the next day was gloriously fine.

We went to the cathedral in the morning, and to our own service in the afternoon, and Margaret and I heard a grand sermon from one of the Carmelites, in the evening.

We roamed about in a sorrowful kind of way, looking at the people in their Sunday attire, coming up to the little convent chapel, stopping at the wayside Stations of the Cross to say their prayers.

They were but roughly painted pictures of those scenes of sorrow and of agony, and yet, methinks, it would be well for us, if we, in our daily walks at home, were sometimes made to think of all that was borne and suffered for our sakes by Him who is our great Example in our daily life.

We keep religion for our churches ; we put holy things out of sight, and by way of excuse we say

we would not make them common ; we shrink from those rude, coarse impersonations of what we hold sacred, when we visit foreign lands.

There are two sides to the question. I almost think it is better that such things should be brought before us even, although the wish must needs come that they were more reverently rendered, than that never, in treading the outer world, should our eyes fall upon those sorrowing scenes, or upon the greatest suffering of all—the Sacred Limbs on the Cross of shame. I have heard of many a man and woman, walking along crowded streets, or lonely country roads, kept from the commission of some sin, when the moonbeams have shown them that outstretched Form and that meekly bowed Head.

Rough may the painting or the sculpture have been in detail, but it told its sweet, sad story, and it saved a soul from sin. But I must not moralize ; we must be getting home now.

Monday, the day of our departure, was bright and sunny ; it was some satisfaction to hear from our kind hostess that there would be rain before night.

We had quite an affecting parting all round. The General's tears were really apparent ; he was such a kindly old gentleman, and for some reason

or other seemed to appreciate us immensely. I certainly advise all travellers, who mean to stop at Lucerne for more than a day, to take up their quarters at "Our *pension*."

They are sure to find room there—that is one of the peculiarities of the establishment. We used to hear that there was not a corner for any one, and we used to see carriages laden with luggage drive up to the door, and feel sorry for the unknown occupants of the vehicles, who, we felt sure, must be sent away.

Not a bit of it. Our pity was all wasted. Somehow or another, they were one and all taken in.

Where they were located was always a mystery to us. Not in the "Cat House" certainly—we knew that ; but there was a so-called "Cow House," and a "Goat House," and sundry other houses, where I presume they were put up. Anyhow, when we all met at meals, an apparently happier, more contented assemblage it would be impossible to find.

Well, we took our last look at the cathedral with its graceful spires, and the old bridges, and at Pilatus with neither cap nor collar on, and we were in the train once more, *en route* for Basel ; and long before we got there, the rain began again, and we reached Strasburg at ten o'clock at night, and felt

that, after all, we had done a wise thing in leaving Lucerne.

The next day was given to lionizing the old town, with its grand cathedral, and the archi-



THE STORKS OF STRASBURG

tectural wonders of its quaint old houses ; and we sighed over the ruin wrought by the horrors of the Franco-German war, and were almost tearful over the tumble-down chimneys, which had been the home of the storks for generations, but from which

the poor birds had been driven by the thunder of the enemy's artillery.

We were in a sighing mood. It was hard to feel that our holiday was nearly at an end ; and when I paid the hotel bill, and found that we had been charged two marks for a cauliflower, and was informed, when I remonstrated, that " it was a very rare vegetable," I, in my depression of spirits, put down all foreigners as humbugs, always excepting the inhabitants of our beloved snow mountains.

We travelled to Brussels by night, and spent two days there. We had meant to visit Ghent and Bruges, and we accomplished the former, and much enjoyed the day in the old Flemish town, with all its historic associations. But, very reluctantly, we gave up the idea of seeing Bruges, the weather was so hopelessly bad ; such fearful gales and storms were predicted, that I thought we had better get home. I was afraid my charges might take cold, and I felt that my reputation was at stake. I wanted to restore them to their respective families really benefited by the change.

We came back *via* Calais, to avoid the long sea voyage. Oh, how different that most miserable crossing was to that glorious one, just that day five weeks, on the Ostend boat !

" The four " went down into the cabin ; I remained

on deck, saw the "comfort" washed to the other side of the vessel by a huge wave, and had not the energy to rescue it. It turned up again, somehow or another, but I had a miserable foreboding, under the depressing influences which surrounded me, that it had done its work and fulfilled its mission. The misery of the voyage was over in two hours, and we once more stood on English ground.

I think there remains little else to say, except that, in spite of all our sorrow that our holiday was ended, we were thankful for the Mercy which had brought us safely home again.

One last word about the money. It lasted splendidly. We were able to pay the cab fares to our very doors, which, I believe, is a fact so unusual that it is worthy of record ; and the other day, in the pocket of that inestimable "comfort" I found a little gold five-franc piece.

If every one had *her* rights, I suppose I ought to have given the others a franc each, and kept one for myself. I did nothing of the kind ; I put the pretty little coin into a box—the first deposit towards more "Foreign Freaks."

THE END.

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